

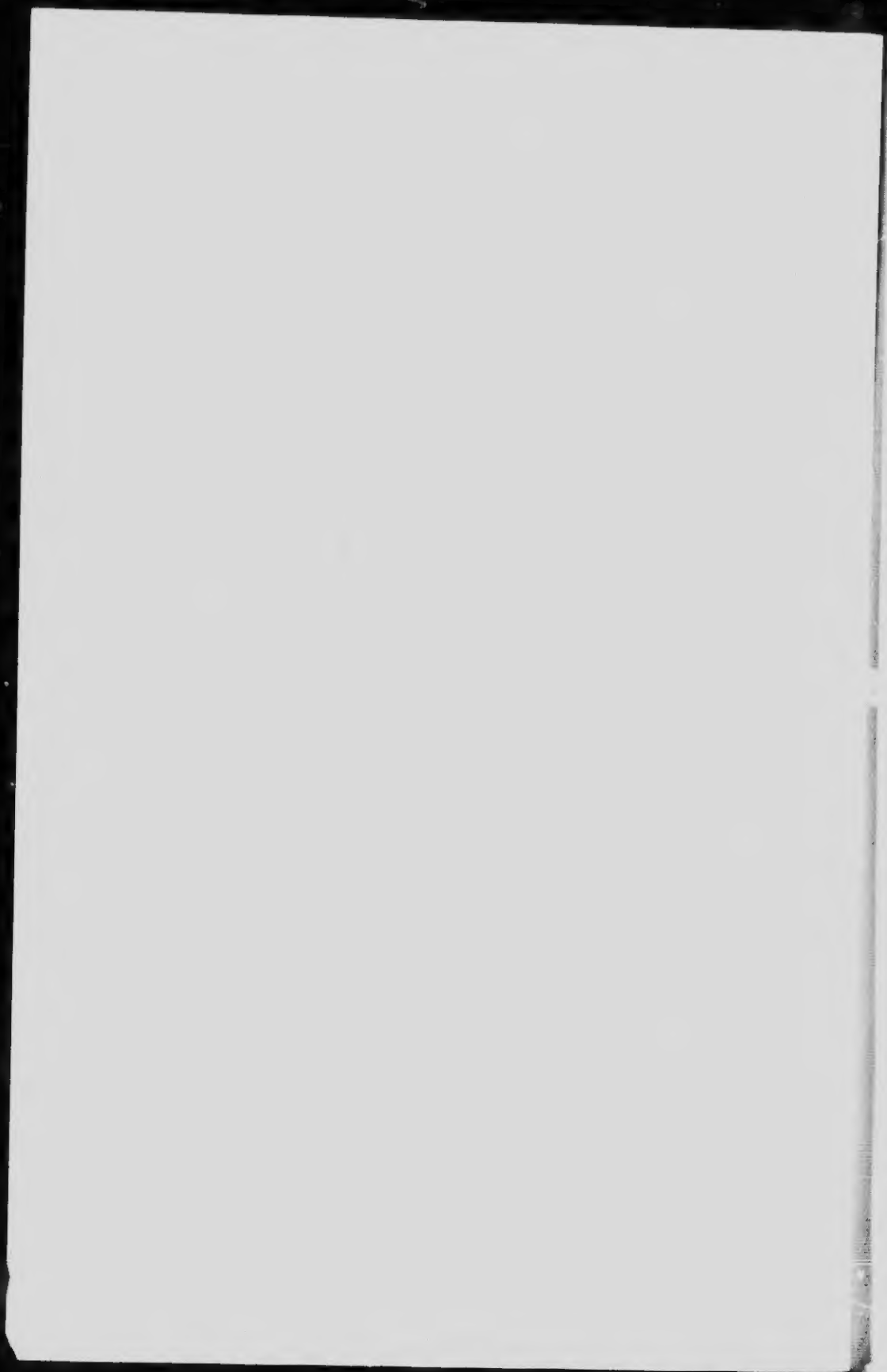
KARL GRIER



LOUIS TRACY

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KARL GRIER





# KARL GRIER

The Strange Story of a  
Man with a Sixth Sense

BY

LOUIS TRACY

AUTHOR OF "THE WINGS OF THE MORNING," "THE PILLAR  
OF LIGHT" AND "THE GREAT MOGUL."



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## CHAPTER I

### THE AFFAIR OF THE TEA GARDEN

THE chief actor in the singular, perhaps unprecedented, incidents herein recorded now leads a sedate existence of British top-hatted respectability. Many reputable citizens of London and Edinburgh, not to mention cosmopolitan Paris and New York, to whom he is personally known, would be exceedingly surprised were they to recognize, through the thin disguise of places and people, the popular man of the world whose extraordinary career is now set forth for the first time.

Some few there are who dimly comprehend Karl Grier's secret. They, for reasons that shall be obvious, will keep their amazed imaginings locked in their own hearts. Others, men of precise science for the most part, who have been approached in order that certain remarkable phenomena might be sanely investigated, refute with scorn the suggestion that such a

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person ever lived. That is to say, they cannot deny Karl Grier, with his giant frame and his hearty whole-souled laugh, but they do deny most emphatically that he ever possessed the unknown power which he exercised in a marvelous way during several eventful years.

If aught could make Karl angry, it is the stupid agnosticism of these learned critics, true children of the dull tribe which began, ages ago, to create its own unbending gods of stone and wood, and has been setting up barriers to knowledge ever since, building dogmatic walls the crossing of which is forbidden by bell, book, and candle.

Yet it is not within my province to rail against these infallibles, who smile at the density which imprisoned Galileo in the sixteen hundreds, but refuse to-day's evidence of a new realm in man's mental activity. Sometimes Karl has been tempted, with me, his biographer, as tempter, to place before an astounded world such an array of facts as must convert these scoffers into fervid disciples. He has been deterred — and here I may claim some credit, too — by personal considerations, by dread of the fierce light of publicity being shed on those near and dear to him, and, in lesser degree, by the fact that a settled, happy

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existence has stifled the weird and subtle sense which was vouchsafed to him during the growth and plentitude of his bodily and spiritual powers. So, peace be to the critics. "Eppur si muove!" sighed the astronomer, recanting the truth to save his life.

For, without further preamble be it said, my friend Grier was endowed with, or permitted by Providence to use, a sixth sense, which he and I, seeking its correct classification in after years, named telegnomy, or far-knowing. That is the nearest the vocabulary of our times will approach to the description of his mysterious faculty. Strictly speaking, it was not a new sense, as one differentiates seeing from hearing, or taste from touch. Purists in words may even quarrel with me for using the term "sense" to denote a transcendental union of reason with physical attributes. But, in writing a quaint, almost sensational, narrative of actual occurrences, it is well to be content with the simple phraseology of every-day ; and, in that well-defined vehicle of plain thought, the faculty vouchsafed to Karl Grier was a sense.

Its stupendous range, its curiously rational limitations, will be grasped only by an intelligent reading of these memoirs. So a truce to the "Yea" and "Nay" of theorists. Let



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the story, or group of queer incidents, as it may be termed, speak for itself.

"I have always thought," said Karl, musing once in analytical mood, "that my sixth sense owed its inception to the Babel-like jargon of languages which surrounded my youthful years. I remember distinctly being attired, on my fourth birthday, in a new sailor suit, which showed to an admiring family circle that I was rated as a first-class A.B. on His Majesty's ship *Victorious*. We lived then in India, where my father grew tea on a Darjeeling plantation. I had a half-caste French nurse from Trichinopoly, a Mahomedan bearer, or male servant, a Scottish father and a German mother, and each member of our little republic spoke his or her own tongue when the heart was stirred. In my jubilation I endeavored to climb a creeper, and fell off the low veranda on to a path covered with sharp flints. Both I and the suit were damaged at all points of contact with the globe. My mother shrieked: 'Ach, Himmel!' but, being a woman of steady nerves, she soon perceived that little real mischief had resulted, and she went on: 'Er ist zum seemann nicht geboren' (He is not cut out for a sailor). My father said, with a laugh: 'We should hae kepit the bairn in a cutty sark.' The nurse flew to my assistance, cry-

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ing: 'Pauvre p'tit! Tu n'es pas assez adroit!' whilst Abdul Khan, my bearer, tried to console my grief with his 'Kuchparwani, batcha, mainne mitai lata!' (Never mind, little one, I have some sweets for you.) Now, these varied exclamations, conveying many distinct ideas in four languages, of which the Eastern differed in every respect from the European, were instantly intelligible to me. Abdul Khan alone comforted me — the others hurt my pride. But the real point is that I understood them all to the finest shade of meaning. To put it plainly, sounds, and not words, conveyed clear ideas. It was the first unknown step along an uncharted road; the step a fox-terrier takes when he grasps the inflections of his master's voice."

"I suppose that is what people mean when they say that you can never really speak a language well until you learn to think in that language?" said I.

Karl laughed gently, and a dreamy look came into his eyes. At one time this would have been the certain prelude to a condition which, for want of a more accurate term, we called a "trance," though it was far removed from the muscular or mental subjection induced by mesmerism or clairvoyance. Now he simply dropped his eye-lids, took a whiff

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or two of his pipe, and, when he glanced at me again, there was quiet humor, not fantasy, in his big blue orbs.

"No," he answered, "the states may be kin, but they differ, as the visual powers of a daisy, which can see the sun, differ from those of man. Education, by its necessary artificiality, tends to destroy natural gifts. The daily growth of a living language supplies adequate proof of this truism. The first sounds uttered by man, quite apart from signs and symbols, implied a want or an emotion. Those primary words run in unbroken gamut through all variations of speech or dialect. Of course, they vary, but not greatly, no more than the bark of the Indian dog, the grunt of the Indian pig, the caw of the Indian crow — I could recite hundreds of examples — vary from the typical cries of their European congeners. To my childish intelligence, sounds were all sufficing. I knew the voices of nature. The whinney of a horse told me whether he was hungry or thirsty, afraid or angered. I heard the kites whistling their fellow-ghouls to the feast. I could actually distinguish the answering bleat of a kid to the hoarse summons of its dam amidst a flock of goats. Good heavens! if only my baby mind could have uttered its knowledge, and found a scientific recorder,

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what undeciphered mysteries of human development might I not have solved!"

Although this train of reminiscence was somewhat removed from the far more curious and complex sense he developed afterwards, it was interesting as showing a tendency towards the abnormal.

"Have you any reason to believe that animals ever knew you possessed the key to their utterances?" I asked.

"Not in a convincing degree. Oddly enough, my intelligence was more receptive than creative. Certainly my dogs, ponies, birds, and other so-called dumb creatures with which I was brought in contact were in extraordinary sympathy with me. But such human and animal collusions are far from rare. And I could not speak to them with effect. Our physical appliances are fashioned by use, remember. If the nasal sounds of French will change the shape of the roof of a Frenchman's mouth, or singing develop the singer's throat in a single lifetime, how much more profoundly must untold generations of ordered language have modified the vocal organs. So my four-footed friends could not understand my harsh imitations. They were too far down the scale. I could plumb *their* depths, but *they* could only gaze at me wistfully, as men look at the stars."

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He went on to tell how he startled his father, one day, by the information that a colony of minahs (the Indian starling) had found a snake in a flower-bed, which was true, though none could guess how the child knew it; and he made me shake with merriment as he described the antics of a monkey, whose chattering rage he did succeed in burlesquing with some degree of realism. But these are not serious contributions to science, and I am truly endeavoring to help forward my fellow-men along the path which Morse, Edison, Marconi, and many another earnest worker, each in a separate sphere, yet each striving for the same goal, have indicated to a world not yet ready to advance. I pass, therefore, to the first recorded use of his sixth sense. In all probability there were minor instances, which were unnoticed either by his parents or by the child himself. This one could not be gainsaid. It verified itself most dramatically.

Karl's peculiar gift of understanding the crude languages of nainads — he lost the hidden key long before any one thought of testing him with Homeric verse or the polished periods of Cicero — enabled him to converse with the unkempt Nepalese and wilder Tibetans who occasionally visited the station in the guise of petty traders. He was six years old when

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the famous Hutchinson Raid took place. Already he had learnt to read, but, luckily, his parents, being wise folk, determined that such a precocious child must not be encouraged in his studies, else the growth of method in that wondrous little brain must already have dimmed his comprehension of primeval speech.

The Griers' tea-garden, with its fine bungalow and spacious coolie quarters, was an old estate. It stood on the outskirts of the scattered houses which comprised the station. In a neighboring valley, two miles away, a London company had established a huge garden, employing nearly three thousand coolies, and the manager was a Mr. Frank Hutchinson. One day, at the beginning of the hot weather, Hutchinson drove to the local bank, and obtained a very considerable sum of money, some twenty odd thousand rupees, to pay the monthly wages. Being a "brither Scot," he called on the Griers, left his wife there for a gossip, and his little daughter, Maggie, for a romp with Karl. The three set out towards home in time for dinner, and Karl was, naturally, very reluctant to part from his little playmate.

She, too, nearly wept, so he consoled her by saying:—

"Don't cwy, Maggie" — for he had a slight

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lisp — "Mamsie says we are coming to see you soon, and *I'll think of you until Nanna (the French nurse) puts me to bed.*"

Maggie evidently found consolation in this limited promise of fidelity. It can only be assumed that the boy kept his vow. In his mind he followed the child and her parents down into the valley, across the river, and up the hill-side to the spacious compound which held the house and offices. Arrived there, in fancy, his active brain roamed about the place, which he knew well. Then his wits wandered. His father, quitting the monthly accounts in time for dinner, found the nurse sitting in the veranda, sewing, in a dim light. Near her was Karl, unusually quiet, curled up in a big peg-chair. Grier spoke, but the boy did not answer. Stooping, he noticed a tiny stream of blood issuing from a nostril.

Though not a nervous man, he lifted Karl into his arms with quick anxiety, and the youngster appeared to wake from a light sleep.

"What is the matter, sonny?" he asked, somewhat puzzled. "Why is your nose bleeding?"

"I don't know, Daddy, but I have been a long way, and maybe I hurted myself."

"Been a long way! Has Master Karl been out, Mathilde?" he inquired.

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"Mais non, m'sieur. He play some time, then he sit himself in the chair."

"But I have, Daddy," persisted the child. "I went with Maggie. I heard Mr. Hutchinson tell Mrs. Hutchinson that their tea crop was not a good one, as the soil was too light, and he thought the Company had not chosen a good pitch."

This was sufficiently bewildering from a boy of six, being an opinion which Hutchinson would not utter even to Grier himself. But Karl, whose lisp need not be reproduced, was brimful of news.

"Oh, it is quite, quite true," he cried in response to his father's laughing protest. "Maggie went in, and was a naughty girl because she could not sit up for dinner. Then I went around the house, and I saw some hill men in a wood. They said they were going to kill Mr. Hutchinson to-night, and steal his money. One of them will give the *chowkidars* (watchmen) something to make them sleep. They will put the bags of money on some ponies, and go by a h'll path into Sikkim. There are eight brown ponies and one white one. I counted them."

Some inkling of a tremendous fact stayed the remonstrance on Mr. Grier's lips. He was Scottish, you see, a Highlander bred and



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born, and he *almost* believed in second sight. So he encouraged Karl to talk, obtained additional and more convincing details, for the child gave him the exact phrases of the Shillong patois used by the bandits, and finally handed over the youthful visionary to Mathilde, telling her to ask Mrs. Grier to keep some dinner for him — he was called away on urgent business.

He rode to the house of the District Superintendent of Police. As a favor, for Grier was a popular man, Captain Melville gathered a few mounted constables, and they all cantered off to the Hutchinsons' garden. In the compound they found a stranger fraternizing with the servants, and in his possession was a quantity of sweetmeats, which subsequent examination proved to be rank with *dhatūra*, an Indian drug which can induce sleep or death.

A raid on the wood secured a dozen rascals armed to the teeth, and the nine ponies, exactly as Karl had described them. There was a small fight, in which a sepoy's head was cut open, but the surprise was too effectual for any serious resistance to be offered. "Conspiracy" was the root word of the legal indictment which sent the gang to the Andamans convict settlement.

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The affair was known as the "Hutchinson Raid." Such things happen in India. But Karl's share in the adventure was kept quiet by the authorities. It would have discredited the otherwise conclusive evidence, they thought.

## CHAPTER II

### THE SAVING OF CONSTANTINE

THOUGH others might calmly dismiss the child's vision as an extremely ordinarily accurate delusion — "an unusually elaborate series of coincidences," the policeman termed it — not so his parents. A man from Inverness, a woman from the Schwartz Wald, may be dour and stolid to outward seeming, but they are highly imaginative by nature.

An ancestor of Grier's, a warrior bard, took service with the Elector-Palatine, and this remote link led to the Indian tea-planter marrying a stout and pretty Gretchen from the borders of the Black Forest. Karl, named after his German grandfather, not altogether without an eye to the main chance, I regret to say, was their only child, and were he the ugliest duckling ever hatched he would yet have been their greatest treasure. But he was a very good-looking, merry-eyed, manly little fellow, with a face like one of Murillo's angels, and eyes with the blue of the Red Sea in them. If you are in doubt as to the true blend of sapphire and ultramarine meant by that tint,

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ask any sailor-man of your acquaintance, and he will tell you that the blue of the Red Sea is a deep, unvarying, steadfast color, while the blue of the Mediterranean is, often as not, a steely mistral gray.

In a word, Mr. and Mrs. Grier secretly worshiped their bonny chick, and it was a great shock to them to discover that his developing brains held compartments not within common ken. Therefore, although Karl ate his meals heartily, and throve apace, they kept a close eye on him, and compared notes whenever any curious action or utterance caught their attention. And what eagle-like intensity there is in that wistful parental glance! How it detects and interprets signs and portents! What degenerates must be the father and mother whose first warning of danger to their young comes from a nurse!

So it came to pass that once, aged seven, Karl had the earache. "Goodness me!" cries the experienced matron, "that is nothing to cause domestic flutterings. A pinch of bicarbonate of soda dissolved in a teaspoonful of hot water, or, in severe attacks, a few drops of laudanum on cotton-wool, will deaden the pain and induce sleep."

Yes, madam, but if your little Tom, Dick, or Harry remarked that "the music was doing it,"

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and, when pressed for details, began to explain that some one was playing a flute, thus — whereupon Karl softly hummed part of the obligato to the nightingale song from the "Marriage of Jeannette" — if, moreover, your budding genius went on:

"There is a lady singing now. Listen:

Au bord du chemin qui passe ma porte  
Fleurit un bel aubepin, un bel aubepin. . . ."

and you knew quite well that the Commissioner's niece, helped by a love-sick subaltern who fluted, was probably singing that identical song in a house over a mile distant, what would you do?

Send for the doctor, of course.

The doctor came, a hard-headed Scot — they thrive in India, those Scotsmen — and heard the story. At first he was inclined to place a mother's vagaries firmly on one side, but, when a *chuprassi* (messenger) brought a reply to Mrs. Grier's note, and he read what the Commissioner's niece had written, he stroked his long nose silently. For this was the answer:

"Yes, Mr. Browne was here for luncheon. About two o'clock he ran through the 'Rossignol' song with me, first without the voice, afterwards with all the frills. But what on

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earth made you guess it? Mr. Browne is so amazed that he is staying to tea. *Do* come and tell us all about it."

"And ye say ye mentioned the chune yerself, Mrs. Grier?" said he meditatively.

"Yes, indeed. I heard Miss Nicholls sing it at the Gloucesters' concert and Karl was not there. What can it all mean, doctor?"

"I wish I could read that riddle. Ye would see all the letters of the alphabet afther me name. But trouble not yer head about Karl, Mrs. Grier. A slight discharge is beginning, and that brings instant relief."

He sought Grier in the big drying-room of the tea factory.

"That boy of yours is a pheenomenon," he said. "The sensory zone of his brain is, I should imagine, of remarkable size and unique capacity. With care, and ordinary luck, he should grow into a marvelous man. But yer wife must not fret if he puzzles her at times. He has the digestion of an ostrich, and the stamina of a young bull."

"Is there any way of accounting for his queer faculties?" asked the planter.

"How can the normal account for the abnormal?" answered the doctor. "Here we have a set of nerves the functions of which are ill understood. We know that unilateral

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destruction of a center will partially abolish sensation on the opposite side of the body. A bilatereal lesion will destroy all sensation. In simple language, if the hearing nerves are damaged on the right side, you are somewhat deaf in the left ear; but general destruction means total deafness. That is what happens when the ordinary appliances are deranged. It is beyond me to explain the process whereby those same appliances obtain a tenfold, perhaps a thousand-fold, activity."

"Is such a thing possible?"

The Civil Surgeon selected a cigar from five exactly similar weeds in his case with a care that betokened a nice discrimination.

"One does not discuss these matters with womenfolk, Grier; they think ye are flying in the face of Providence," he said. "Therefore, keep my opeenion for yer own lug, so to speak. I have a theory, a pipe-and-tobacco bit of pheelosophy, mind you, that human inventiveness is bounded only by the latent powers of the human brain. The limits are absolute, but they are far beyond our dimmest comprehension, as yet. I suppose you never saw an epileptic lunatic?"

"No."

The tea-planter disliked the abrupt question. When you come to think of it, it had a dis-

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agreeable sound in a discussion of a pretty child's simple ailment. Doctors are apt to forget their hearers' unscientific feelings.

"It provides a most interesting study," said Dr. Macpherson, with a grim glee. "Such a case is frequently accompanied by sensory hallucinations and certain subjective sensations, such as unseen flashes of light and color, strange, and often offensive, tastes and smells, the result of some morbid irritation of the cortical sensory centers, which are the anatomical substrata of ideation."

"What the — what has all this got to do with Karl?" demanded Grier, with rising wrath.

"Softly, noo, ma man. Before ye build ye mun have a foundation. I am one of those who think that insanity is closely akin to genius. An extra dense membrane may convert a potential Isaac Newton into an actual eediot. The other day, a clever Frenchman — they are daring deevils, the French — opened an imbecile's skull, rearranged his brain lobes, and provided space for expansion. The imbecile went through all the processes of intellectual growth, and is now a sane man. Why should not nature go one better than the surgeon, and suddenly irradiate her wide realm by some lightning gleam? In other days her



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efforts in that direction led her subjects to martyrdom or sanctity, by the sheer chance of their being on the winning or losing side. Mostly, both then and now, she sends her unfortunate failures to the mad-house."

"Look here, Macpherson," interrupted Grier hotly, "you are talking about my boy, remember."

"Deed, ay! He's a credit to ye, but he wouldn't have the earache if ye hadn't dowered him wi'a thick cranium."

And the doctor hurried away, sore because his grains of science had fallen on such un-receptive soil.

Karl, of course, recovered speedily, and the more he learnt to appreciate a Manipur pony, a brace of sporting fox-terriers, and an air-gun, the less prone was he to uncanny manifestations. As the sway of Mathilde declined, the more did he unconsciously acquire the lore of the jungle, until, at ten years of age, he had the wisdom and beauty of a young god, though he could scarce write his name, and spelled as a Scotchman jokes.

So a family council sat many times, and there came a day when Mrs. Grier and Karl leaned against the rail of the P. & O. steamer, *Ganges*, and watched the form of the stalwart planter until he, and the Calcutta Ghaut,

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and the busy banks of the Hughli River, dissolved in a mist of tears.

For India is an evil land in which to rear tender plants of European stock, and Karl must go home, not to see the glowing east again until he was a man. His mother went with him, and, if God favored the loving family, they would all be reunited when Grier sold his tea-garden in its highest state of efficiency some three years later. These partings yield the sternest test of an imperial race. Hearts which do not break suffer the fiercer strain.

Karl, who had forgotten the sea, being scarce able to toddle when his parents quitted Britain, quickly merged his sorrows in the marvels of the Bay of Bengal. His mother, choking her grief each day until the boy slept, watched him narrowly. She was a very intelligent woman, and, although her formula was wordless, she had a definite belief that the immensity of the ocean, its far-flung silence, might affect her extraordinary son in some unexpected manner.

Luckily, Dr. Macpherson, time-expired and pensioned, was on board, and in him she had a sympathetic friend also who was a skilled observer. He concurred with her that repression or secrecy was not to be thought of in connection with Karl. The boy's insatiable

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curiosity about ships and their ways was not denied such information as was obtainable. The captain, attracted one morning by his joyous laugh, took him up to the chart-house, showed him how to take an observation, explained the curvature of the earth, and, finally, made him pull the cord of the siren, thereby summoning all hands to collision quarters for inspection.

Now, the raucous blast of the fog-horn spoke to the youngster as the voice of the ship. It probed boundless depths in Karl's soul. He heard the tremulous waves of sound speeding over the face of the waters long after the steam breath was dry in the whistle. He heard, though he knew it not, the solemn echoes as the rolling harmony was sent up from sea to clouds and back to the sea again.

And he began to "dream." Mrs. Grier, fearful of the outcome, would have distracted his attention, but Dr. Macpherson, who had never seen the boy in the actual state of exaltation, besought her not to check him.

The day passed without incident. After dinner they were on deck, enjoying the glorious tropical moon, "that orbèd maiden, with white fire laden," which some globe-trotting impressionist has described as yellow! Macpherson, thinking Karl's visionary mood had

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passed without result, pointed out such planets as were ascendant, and added the information that several hundreds of smaller bodies were invisible, save to astronomers.

"I can see a good many," said Karl, instantly.

"Nonsense. Those are stars," smiled the doctor.

"No. I mean round black things, like balloons. Some of them are shiny on one side."

"By gad!" muttered the man under his breath. He gazed up at the glittering firmament.

"That big fellow there is Jupiter," he said. "Can you discover anything peculiar about him?"

"Yes," said Karl, instantly. "There are three little dots quite near. They look like pins stuck in a blue cloth."

"Karl, did anybody ever tell you that Jupiter had three moons?"

"I never heard of Jupiter before, but I have often seen the three moons," was the amazing answer.

"That is true," interposed Mrs. Grier. "We kept such problems from his ken."

What Dr. Macpherson might have said will never be known. They were standing on the port side, well forward. On a clear space aft some light-hearted people were waltzing. In

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utter disobedience of the ship's rules, a young Armenian, scion of a great commercial house in London and Calcutta, was sitting on the rail. Some one cannoned against him and he fell, yelling, into the sea.

Instantly there was a hubbub of screams and rushing feet. A cool-headed man threw a life-buoy after the unfortunate youth, and others shouted to the officer of the watch. Very speedily the steamer's way was stopped and the engines reversed.

The ship's framework throbbed under the agony of the giant machines thus rudely checked in their work. British quartermasters and lithe Larsons worked like fiends to clear a boat's hamper and swing out the davits. But it was a hopeless task. Great steamers slip through a mile of water with such rapidity, and the course was so interfered with by reversing the propellers, that nothing short of a miracle would reveal the whereabouts of the hapless Armenian, even if he still floated and retained consciousness.

"Mrs. Grier —" began Macpherson.

"I know what you would say," she cried bravely. "Yes, let Karl help, and let me try to thank God he has the power."

Were it not for Macpherson's great reputation and personal popularity the captain would

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scarcely have listened to him in that confused moment. Even as it was, he only understood the doctor to say that Constantine, the Armenian, could be found, and he gave permission in a dazed way for the man and the boy to be seated in the boat before it was lowered.

Then Macpherson had to convince a sceptical third officer, and, greatest difficulty of all, he had to bend Karl's excited wits to the task in hand, for the child was delighted with the adventure.

The splash of the oars, the stealing away of the huge black hull of the *Ganges*, the earnest words of Macpherson, soon had their effect. Karl commenced to know what was expected of him.

"Yes," he said, standing up on a seat in his eagerness, and pointing to a different course, "he is there, crying out loud. He is calling for his mother."

Not the best sailor of them all could see or hear aught. Yet, for want of other guide, the third officer swung round the boat's head.

Ever and anon Karl told them where the Armenian was, and even shouted, in his shrill treble, to encourage him.

At last, after twenty minutes of strenuous tugging, a quartermaster in the bows roared hoarsely, "By the Lord, I can see him!"

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"Of course," chirruped Karl. "I was there all the time!"

So a half-drowned, wholly hysterical Constantine, clinging desperately to a buoy which he refused to abandon, was dragged into the boat, and Karl was restored to his weeping mother's arms, while strange tales ran through the ship when the screw jogged merrily onwards once more.

That saving of Constantine meant a good deal to Karl, as shall be seen.

## CHAPTER III

### THE FINDING OF MAGGIE HUTCHINSON

SIR WILLIAM MACPHERSON earned his K.C.I.E. not so much by his thirty years of India as by the comparative leisure which enabled him to write that famous essay on "Brain Excitations." He has told me since that the genesis of the theory which likens man to an induction coil came to him as the oars swung merrily back to the *Ganges*, he striving the while to restore the Armenian's vitality.

"Karl," he whispered, stirred by the impulse of the moment, "can you see your father?"

The boy looked unerringly towards the north, where Darjeeling lay, eight hundred miles distant.

"No," he said after a slight pause, "it is dark."

"Dark?" repeated the scientist.

"Yes, like a fog at night, you know."

"But there is no fog, and it was quite as dark a few minutes since, when you saw Mr. Constantine in the sea."

Karl seemed to focus his thoughts once more. Then he nestled wearily close to his friend.



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"Something seems to press me back, and I am tired," he said.

Every woman who reads this would, in all probability, like to box Macpherson's ears. And, indeed, he had the good grace to be ashamed of himself, though, if doctors did not push individual experiments a trifle too far occasionally, the mass of humanity would be the worse for their caution. Nevertheless, though he contented himself with asking the third officer to shield the boy from the keen surface air of the sea, his mind was busy. Karl's wonderful comprehension of root words was known to him, and he felt that the expressions "dark," "fog," "something seems to press me back," even the unwonted excuse of being "tired," were not chosen at random.

Then he remembered how a friend had taken him once, when home on furlough, to witness certain telephonic tests conducted by the Post-office engineers at St. Martin's-le-Grand. An instrument was affixed to an appliance which registered 10,000, 15,000, 20,000 miles of resistance at will, for such high tensions are needed when sea-cables are laid. It was instructive to hear the same human voice dying away as the conductivity of the wire decreased. Again, he happened to be present when the Indo-European Telegraph Company carried out

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their famous experiment, and actually linked a transmitter in Paris with a receiver in Calcutta. As far away as Teheran the action of the electric indicator was sharp and distinct, but from Constantinople westwards through Vienna the current became sluggish, until the supreme effort of Paris required slow and careful manipulation ere the message emerged from chaos.

Here were unfailing indications of what Karl meant by "pressing back" and "tired." But what was the significance of the darkness, the fog? Suddenly Macpherson asked himself:

"What was the force which fought against the thousands of miles of telegraph wire? Suppose there was no wire? Yet the force remained!"

It came to him that the child cast his bright intelligence forth in ever-spreading Hertzian waves, and that his perceptive powers diminished with distance, on the well-established ratio of the decrease of sound as the circle widens and air-waves lengthen with slower movement. Moreover, the apparent difficulty of reconciling his instant discovery of planets known only to astronomers with his inability to penetrate deeply the gloom of earth vanished when the lateral density of the air mantle was taken into account. To see the three

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moons of Jupiter! That was a marvel in itself. Strangely enough, Du Maurier, an artist dreamer, had attributed the power to one of the characters in his novel *The Martian*. But that was a phase in a spirit romance; here was a child with eyes like telescopes and ears like telephones.

Greatly was the scientist tempted to try Karl again on the nearer, and wholly unknown, physical features of Colombo. But he resisted and vigorously chafed the Armenian's chest and back, though, to be sure, the tenacious clinging of the youth to the canvas buoy rendered such massage difficult.

Thenceforth, during the voyage home, Constantine pestered Karl with a ludicrous, dog-like fidelity. The Armenian was lean, tall, and dark, with the big, black eyes, large mouth, small ears, and prominent nose of his race. Ordinarily, he was a bumptious and exceedingly "clever" young man, the heir to crores of rupees, and a business of world-wide renown; yet the mere sight of Karl skipping towards him along the deck would stop his blatant chatter and convert him into a sort of human greyhound, a timid animal, which had just caught sight of its master. This submissiveness amused the other passengers, annoyed Mrs. Grier, and caused Macpherson certain ponderings.

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Constantine told the doctor that when he found himself in the water grasping the life-buoy his first impression was that the ship could not possibly find him. He began to cry in a frenzy, but suddenly he became reassured. After that he had no fear of being drowned, but he had a horrible premonition that a huge shark was rushing from the depths with incredible speed to devour him. The memory of this shark always returned whenever he saw Karl! The monster's jaws opened! He could feel it crush his bones!

The boy throve splendidly aboard ship. Constantine went to England overland from Marseilles, but he met the *Ganges* at Tilbury, and Mrs. Grier could hardly refuse the aldermanic gold watch and absurdly heavy chain he presented to Karl. The watch had a fine inscription, too: "From Paul Constantine to Karl Grier, in memory of the s.s. *Ganges*, Bay of Bengal, Lat. 12.10 N.; Long. 84.46 E."

There was a date, but Karl was saved from mind-searchings by the fact that his mother placed the gift in her bank, to await later years.

And then Karl went to school. Just picture this sturdy little human dynamo, with his superhuman eyes and ears, sitting down in class with a number of youthful Edinburgh

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contemporaries! Yet it was impossible for his parents to encourage the growth of his spiritual faculties (as we may describe them) at the expense of the equipment needed to fit him for the citizenship of the world. So he learnt the exact locality of the North Cape in Lapland, the value of the common denominator, and the great utility of the algebraic  $x$ . And, as he pored over books, so the hidden spark dimmed.

At first he was wont to startle his companions no less than his tutors. When a master was explaining that the moon was a satellite of the earth, and was popularly known as a destroyed world, owing to the arid mountains and volcanic chasms with which her bright face is decorated, it was slightly ridiculous to be told by a boy of eleven, all aglow with interest — "Oh, yes, sir. I saw the lunar mountains quite plainly last night. And there are several great pits as black as ink."

"Nonsense, Grier!" would the master say sharply, and Karl would be stilled for the hour. Hence, he kept to himself the daily knowledge he had of the hours of high water in the Forth, many miles away.

Once, by chance, the same master had arranged to take his class on a boating excursion up the Firth, and the question of tide arose.

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Karl volunteered the information that the tide would be high about three o'clock. Examined as to his accuracy (he was a careless young dog in matters of spelling or arithmetic) he admitted that he had no actual knowledge save the "feeling."

Fortunately, Mr. David Malcolm, the master, was a man prone to take stock of the young idea, so he wrote to Mrs. Grier, and received a positive shock when that sensible and level-headed woman gave him the assurance of evidence that her son was not romancing. Indeed, it may be assumed without fear of contradiction that to Mr. Malcolm's growing appreciation of the boy's powers was due, in great measure, their retention. Even under his kindly sway Karl was rapidly assimilating to the mold of the school. Games, lessons, discipline, the smaller issues of daily intercourse with other boys, were coating the inner perceptiveness with a dense membrane. Again, at this period Karl almost lost his universal language key. Declensions and conjugations choked intuitive knowledge, and, to all seeming, when his father brought him to Oxford at the age of eighteen, young Grier was only a lively, intelligent, and muscular undergrad — exceptionally bright, perhaps, but in no wise the "phee-nomenon" Sir William Macpherson had dubbed him.

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But Dame Nature, not to be balked in the development of her prodigy, arranged matters with that happy knack of hers whereby she cloaks design under the guise of accident.

Grier had been at Oxford two years when a menagerie visited the classical city on the Isis. Although wild beast shows are not regarded by the authorities as essential aids to Oxonian success, Karl and others visited the evil-smelling place. Now, a man will remember through his nose and finger-tips when other more highly trained senses fail. The first sniff of the closely packed laager of caravans brought to Grier's mind a series of vivid pictures of early days in the Himalayan foot-hills. He lost himself a little, but his dreams were interrupted by a scene which yielded an exciting paragraph for next morning's newspapers.

A defective iron screen enabled a gorilla to get at a black panther. The two beasts had a peculiar antipathy to each other, and the showman placed them close together for effect. Like many another dramatist he obtained a "curtain" he had not bargained for. Once the way was clear, by reason of the giving way of the corroded lattice, the animals met in Homeric combat. It was a fine fight, but it did not last long, for the gorilla tore the panther's head off. The other denizens of the menagerie, aroused

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from lethargy by the mortal defiance hurled forth by cat and ape, scented the battle and spoke in strange tongues. And behold! Karl knew what they were saying! He heard the lion and tiger roaring "Kill!" the deer and buffaloes shrieking "Run!" the monkey tribe chattering "Climb, brother, and reach from above!" Above all resounded the raging challenge of the elephant, who, when he is stirred, is the real master of the jungle. Whips, hay-forks, and heavy bars of iron soon ended the disturbance. A number of fainting women were carried out into the fresh air, and Karl, to his intense chagrin, for he was a great dandy in those days, found that his nose had bled freely during the hubbub. When Mr. Verdant Green was "up" his friends would have asked who had tapped his claret, but Karl's companions were anxious to learn the identity of the gentleman who had "punched him on the boko!" Youth is perennial though it may change its idioms. It was disappointing to learn that the gore arose from natural causes. The slaying of the panther had evoked the boys' fighting instincts! Pugilism — to use the naked hands on a foe — that was the ideal! Had not the gorilla thought so?

That night Karl found he could not sleep, so he rose and threw wide a window. His cham-



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bers overlooked the College quadrangle with its well-kept lawn, and, in this time of high summer, the exquisite profiles of Oxford were blended with the soft luxuriance of the trees guarding the peaceful precincts.

Karl was now a tall and graceful young man. A devoted follower of the favorite University sports, he was studious withal, and his natural bent inclined him more to the uncompromising tenets of science than to the literature and dogma of the classics. While following the routine laid down by his father's advisers, he read deeply in the less popular branches of knowledge. Lectures on anthropology, comparative anatomy, philology and physics — subjects which certainly provided a varied intellectual pasturage — invariably counted him among note-takers. Hence, it is not to be wondered at if, on this particular night, he should give earnest thought to the half-forgotten and long-disused powers of his childhood, powers called back into vivid existence by the roaring of a few beasts!

He recalled, quite clearly, the incident in which his friendship with little Maggie Hutchinson figured so dramatically. Again, with the photographic trick of memory, he conjured up the Darjee'ing valley. He saw the green slopes dotted here and there with plant-ers' bungalows, the tea-gardens, resembling gooseberry bushes

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in the first tender shoots, the winding roads, the tropical foliage. Yielding to a whimsical surprise at the accuracy of his impressions, he endeavored to reconstruct some of the incidents of the raid, but he quickly discovered that beyond following events in ordered sequence of recollection he could achieve nothing outside the range of what appeared to be a very precise and realistic memory.

"I wonder where Miss Margaret is now," he murmured, with a smiling glance skywards. "She must be a demure young lady of eighteen or thereabouts. I think my mother said she was in Berlin, having developed a great talent for playing the volin. Berlin! That is a long way from Oxford, and Maggie is abed, sound asleep, little dreaming that a young man in England is picturing her in a Kate Greenaway costume of fourteen years ago."

So in this fanciful mood, the notion suddenly seized him that he would like to see Maggie Hutchinson. What he really meant was that he would be glad to meet her again, and exchange juvenile reminiscences of early days in India. It is important to insist on this point, as his undoubted intention, or desire, when contrasted with that which did really happen, goes far to prove telegnomy a sense and not a mental state.

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Remember, he fancied the girl was in Berlin and in bed, and, being an extremely considerate person, Karl would certainly not have wished to disturb her, even if such a thing were sanely possible.

He thought the external light fled with exceeding rapidity. There was an instant's gloom, and then he was looking at a sunlit scene. The surroundings were quite novel to his eyes. He seemed to be standing on a spacious veranda of a very fine hotel. The flooring, the walls, the pillars, were all of wood, and Karl had never seen a hotel built of that material. Hundreds of well-dressed people were seated around small tables, waiters were flitting to and fro; on an empty table near him he noticed an "engaged" card, and even a *menu du diner* of the previous day. (It was nearly one o'clock when he went to the window.) Beyond a crowded lawn were a theater, a hand-stand, and a raised promenade bordering the sea.

He stared about him with blank curiosity of the stranger. On the right, the hotel buildings shut off the view, but, on the left, the veranda ran a long way. It was bounded, apparently, by the turnstiles of a railway station, and he read, quite distinctly, a prominent notice: "Trains depart for New York every ten minutes between 6 p.m. and midnight."

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Away in the distance he saw a gigantic red brick building bearing the gilded sign "Atlantic Hotel," and he was about to stoop and pick up the menu card - thinking to discover his whereabouts by that means - when his attention was drawn to two persons who separated themselves from a laughing party grouped near the bandstand. The couple, a tall, slightly-built foreign-looking man, and a very pretty girl, whose costume and figure alike bespoke her youth, slowly drew nearer to the hotel veranda.

Grier experienced no amazement when he recognized in the man, Constantine, the Armenian. The young lady was unknown to him at first, until some gesture, accompanied with a smile and a quick upward glance of the eyes, recalled Mrs. Hutchinson, and he reflected that Maggie's mother must have looked like that when she was eighteen.

So this was Maggie herself! How extraordinary! But what was Constantine saying that her face should flame and her big brown eyes survey him so scornfully. They were both talking vehemently. In his eagerness Karl bent forward to listen. He was inclined to step from off the veranda and join them. Perhaps Constantine, the Armenian, required to be kicked.

At that instant he was conscious of a sharp pain in his left hand. He was plunged into a

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dark void, and he came to his ordinary senses to find that he had escaped from falling through the window into the quadrangle only because he had pressed his left hand heavily on the top of a pointed stick used to support some flowers in a window-box.

## CHAPTER IV

### A CAT AND FRANK HOOPER

IN relation to the every-day affairs of life, Karl Grier had nerves of iron, controlled by a well-ordered brain.

"As soon as I recovered my wits," he said, laughingly, afterwards, "I closed the window, examined the injury to my hand, which was painful but of little account, undressed, and went to bed, resolutely determined to sleep. I knew I was overwrought, and that the worst thing I could do was to strive uselessly to read the puzzle of the trance, or vision, I had just experienced. I estimated that it had lasted nearly a quarter of an hour. During those fifteen minutes I had seemingly paid a visit to the United States. That would suffice for one evening. I closed my eyes, endeavored to construct equipotential lines on an imaginary surface containing two electrified spheres, and, as a consequence, was soon sound asleep."

This time, be it noted, there was no sanguinary result of the spell cast upon him. Sir William Macpherson, in the work already alluded to, guardedly called attention to the

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symptoms of bleeding at the nose and ears, and came to the conclusion that Karl presented a hitherto unrecorded phase of hypertrophy of the brain. There were periodical expansions of the encephalon, or, in simple language, the nerve-cells, nerve-tubes, and the rest of the marvelous apparatus which constitute the mental and govern the physical equipment of man, increased in number and power, and, consequently, to a slight extent, in size. All cases previously noted had revealed deficiency of intellect. Either the skull could not accommodate its unwieldy tenant, or the heart could not nourish it. Grier, exercising unknown faculties in childhood, received the requisite nutriment without effort, and growth was permitted by the occasional bursting of a distended membrane.

Obviously, a full scientific explanation of the phenomenon is impossible here. Not one scientist in ten thousand would even admit its existence, and the few who do believe would demand a bulky tome to set forth their reasons.

Karl, untroubled by such considerations, overslept himself, was late for chapel, and was reprimanded for his somnolence! He retained the liveliest impression of all that had taken place, and, being convinced that he had seen some well-known seaside resort in North

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America, invited to his rooms a young New Yorker, who was taking a degree at Oxford. He merely described the scene, without any explanation of its significance, and his friend recognized it at once.

"That is Manhattan Beach," he cried, "one of the places where New York dines when the weather is hot. Society goes to the Beach, the crowd to Coney Island. They are not far apart, as the crow flies, but miles asunder in every other respect. Say, I thought you had never been to the States?"

"Nor have I, to my present knowledge," said Karl with a smile. "I have, so to speak, constructed the picture, by force of imagination, let us say."

"I congratulate you. Personally, I never fail to 'construct' places I have not seen, but I find invariably that the reality differs from the conception as greatly — well, as radically as my version of that cat's plaintive remarks might differ from their true inwardness."

It was night again, and the two were sitting near the open window. Somewhere beneath in the quad a seemingly disconsolate feline was mewing its aspirations. There was a moment's silence while they listened, the American blithely unconscious that he had done nought save utter a harmless pleasantry.



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"Tell me what you think the cat is saying," said Karl, quietly.

"I am not strong on cat," was the reply. "Like Lord Roberts, I detest the whole tribe. Away back in the origin of species I must have an affinity with either the cat's mortal enemy, or its prey. But, as a guess, I should credit puss with remarking that he, or she, is waiting in the gy-arden ne-ow. 'It's a fine ne-ight; oh, won't ye-ou come over the we-all,' is my version."

Your true American can do that sort of thing and preserve the face of a sphinx. His natural drawl lent an adroit buffoonery to his joke. He had not the least notion that his friend was speaking in earnest. But he pricked his ears, metaphorically, when Grier said, beginning in a low monotone, but ending excitedly:

"You are mistaken. That cat is using a chani of defiance. It is old as the hills, the product of the wind-mutterings of storm and the crash of thunder. Listen:

Who art thou who seest with fire, snake-creeping among the bushes?  
Think not thou art hidden.

I also have eyes of flame. Beware!

I am young and strong; I can bite and tear.

I spring far to conquest.

My claws are sharp.

Fly, ere I rend thee!

Comest thou yet? Kill then, kill!"

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As the concluding words rang through the room there came from without the spitting and snarling of a pair of frenzied cats. There was a rush and a scurry, and all was still.

The American leaped to his feet with a somewhat hysterical laugh.

"Say, Grier," he cried, "that's one against me. But how, in the name of the father of all cats, did you manage to wind up your epic of the Tertiary Period at the exact moment the fur began to fly?"

"Sit down, please. I am translating freely, but accurately enough. Animals contrive to enfold many parts of speech in a single sound."

"Do you mean to tell me you *understood* that cat's mewling?"

"I — I think so."

"Your thinking is uncommonly realistic."

"Try to credit me, Hooper. I am not romancing. Somewhere at the back of my head I have a language code which explains these things. If Max Müller can declare with conviction that every thought which ever passed through a human brain may be expressed in one hundred and twenty-one radical concepts, if the earth and the heavens can be composed of sixty chemical substances, surely it is not outrageously impossible for a lower animal

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organism to contrive a large vocabulary out of a few elementary sounds?"

Hooper produced a cigar.

"This requires profound smoke," he said.

"I want help," murmured Karl. "Criticize and question as much as you like, but scoffing will serve no purpose."

"The deuce a scoff. I am far too interested. To begin at the beginning: What is the cat, or cattish, for 'seeing with fire,' and 'snake-creeping,' both exceedingly apt phrases, by the way?"

"I cannot tell you. I only know that these are handy symbols of root ideas. Musicians would comprehend a mental condition of definite thought without syllabic form. Mendelssohn wrote: 'It is exactly at that moment when language is unable to voice the experiences of the soul that the vocation of music opens to us; if all that passes in us were capable of expression in words I should write no more music.' Wagner goes to the extreme of assigning a measured musical phrase to a given idea. Were I not deficient in the parrot's skill of sound-reproduction, I could most certainly converse, in crude suggestion, with many animals. What is speech? Merely the trick of conveying ideas by articulate sounds. Can it be affirmed that man alone is gifted with the

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power? I once heard a gamekeeper calling a corn-crake by using a little mechanical instrument. The bird came, in response to the fancied cry of its mate. It was shot for its credulity. Were my vocal cords differently shaped I could have warned it against danger. Is not that speech?"

"Unless I am greatly mistaken, you are expounding a new thesis of life, Grier," said the American. "Is there any limit? Do you go down the scale? How about insects, reptiles, fishes?"

Karl paused a little while. "Would that I might answer!" he cried at last. "Who am I that I should add unknown words to the sparse total which serves human needs? Think what it means, that list of Müller's! Six score root-ideas, from which we have named 245,000 species of living animals, classified nearly 100,000 fossils, produced the works of Shakespeare and Milton! Yet I swear to you that many a time, in India, lying awake and listening to the croaking of innumerable frogs, I could distinguish the one final shriek of agony of a frog seized by a snake from the million-voiced chorus of its fellows."

"Are these unknown languages always recognizable? If a dog yelps because he has been booted, do you hear him say: 'Stop that,

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you two-legged ruffian! What have I done, I should like to know?' If so, you must have a lively time of it at a cattle-fair, for instance."

Karl laughed. He rose, pulled down the blind, and switched on the electric light.

"I am quite serious," protested his friend. "For goodness' sake don't be vexed if my questions seem idiotic. When I came here to-night I did not expect you to play 'Hail Columbia' with all my preconceived notions."

"Vexed! Why should I be vexed with so strenuous a listener? No, I do not gather up all these animal utterances, else I should go mad. The exercise of my peculiar faculties requires effort. I am like a loaded camera. To take a picture I must raise the shutter."

"You speak in the plural. Was your description of Manhattan Beach based on some other intuition?"

"Yes. If you care to listen I will tell you some strange things. But first I must have your pledge of inviolable secrecy."

Hooper gave ready assurance, and Karl acquainted him with a good many, substantially all the main points, of the facts I have previously recorded.

The American was shrewd and precise. He was studying Roman Law and Jurisprudence at the English University, his avowed object being

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to devote his life to the codification of his own country's laws. Therefore, among the young men of his college, Karl could have found none of quicker and clearer perceptiveness.

When the recital reached the previous night's inexplicable events he checked each item as though it were a section of a statute.

"There is one feature of your unparalleled experiences which stands out in bold relief," he commented, at the close of Grier's story. "You can see and hear only that which is taking place at the precise moment of your trance, as we shall call it. You can look into neither the past nor the future. Last night, allowing for a difference of five hours, you actually saw people dining and listening to the band at Manhattan Beach. It is noteworthy that you saw only, and did not hear. Yet you heard the Armenian yelling for help when he was a mile from the ship. The deduction is obvious. The electric waves, or whatever they are, which convey impressions to your brain, follow the known laws of the transmission of light and sound. If I were poetically inclined, I might put it that you can see the spheres but you cannot hear their music. Now, I am going to ask you, straight out, if you will oblige me by ringing up that young lady again."

"Now?"

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"Right now. It is not far from the same hour."

"I will try," said Karl, simply.

In order to reproduce kindred conditions he extinguished the light, raised the blind and the window, and looked out.

"Last night," he said, "I nearly fell into the quad in my excitement."

"No fear of that unless I fall too," was the emphatic reply.

Karl focused his thoughts on Maggie Hutchinson. He found it easy to follow the trend of circumstances which led up to the vision of the preceding day. Soon there came the now almost familiar darkening of the air and the instantaneous disappearance of surrounding objects, to be succeeded by a well-defined view of a somewhat dimly lighted but spacious apartment. It was a very large room, with an unusually low ceiling, but the decorations, carpets, panels, and queer little windows were fashioned or conceived with much taste. At the farther end was a grand piano. In the center of the floor was a sunken space, guarded by rails. Seated on a sort of divan which ran round the walls were a great many ladies and some half-dozen gentlemen. They were reading, talking, or lying comfortably ensconced in cushions. But the odd thing was that the room and its

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inhabitants absolutely defied the law of gravity. No earthquake that ever shook the globe could make a house sway in such fashion without causing irretrievable ruin.

Yet the people in this uncanny apartment appeared to be in no wise disturbed by its vagaries, and, most amazing thing of all, when any individual crossed the room, or entered, or quitted it, he or she walked with a ridiculous disregard for either the changing angles of the room or Newton's theory. So astonished was Karl by the spectacle that it took him a long time to realize that he was looking at the saloon drawing-room of a big Atlantic liner, which was evidently ploughing through a stiff gale. He saw the ship's name, the *Merlin*, on a printed notice swinging on the wall, and he laughed so heartily at the antics of a fat man who essayed to carry a shawl to a lady on the opposite side of the vessel, that he regained his wits to find Hooper holding his arm and eagerly demanding:

"Well, what have you seen? Why are you laughing?"

Grier, not bewildered in the slightest degree by the sudden transition from the saloon of an ocean-going steamship to his chambers in an Oxford College, told his attentive friend what had transpired.



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Like every up-to-date American, Hooper knew most of the great liners, and kept track of their sailings. An Englishman drops a letter into the pillar-box and trusts to Heaven and the Postmaster-General that it will reach its destination, but the average New Yorker would wonder what was wrong with him if he could not follow the missive by sea and rail, with precise details of the journey from start to finish.

So Hooper ejaculated: "The *Merlin*! Great Scott! She sailed from New York to-day. Was the girl on board?"

"I do not know," admitted Karl. "I did not even look for her, so greatly was I mystified by the wobbliness of everything."

"Well, I guess we've done enough for one *séance*," said the other. "I've read and heard of some top-notch clairvoyants, but I give you best. To-morrow evening, after Hall, I shall have the tangle a bit less knotted, if pen and paper will follow its twists. You were away somewhere for nearly twenty minutes, your eyes were closed, and you reeled so that I thought you would have fallen. Guess you felt the deck heaving! But, say, old man, do you sleep well after this kind of circus?"

"Sleep! I sleep like a healthy navvy!" said Karl.

## CHAPTER V

### KARL'S FIRST MEETING WITH STEINDAL

HOOPER turned up next evening armed with a note-book.

"I did not go to bed until long after sunrise," he said. "When I began to marshal my thoughts into some semblance of order, I was amazed to find how far back into the twilight of human origins you carried me with your cat language. Has it ever struck you how old this world is, how long men have waited before they took their first sure step towards knowledge?"

"Are you speaking of the evolution of matter in general, or of mankind in particular?" asked Grier.

"Of our noble selves, to be sure. Geologically, there is practically no limit backward, but we have been so fed up on individualism that we are only now beginning to abandon useless speculations as to the eternity of the future for a more definite study of the eternity of the past. Now you, with your animal language and your genuine far-seeing, have cleared the mist from a theory I have held nebulously for a year or more. Let me state it in progressive theses:

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(a) Human inventiveness is bounded only by the zone of human intelligence; (b) the capacity of the brain extends far beyond our present scientific comprehension; (c) every new discovery is, therefore, a mere quickening into activity of some special attribute latent in all properly regulated brains; (d) a time may come when man shall know all things, as nothing can happen, nor can have happened, which the brain is not capable of conceiving."

"An old Indian acquaintance, Sir William Macpherson, has told me that he has reached a similar conclusion. Nevertheless, your theorizing vaults a long way in advance of my experiences."

"Not a bit of it. You are merely a living testimony of faculties either undeveloped or deemed dead owing to disuse. Oddly enough, you, my friend, possess powers which we modern degenerates — beef-fed and stodgy with misapplied civilization — coolly relegate to the lower animals or, at the best, to savage tribes. Watch cattle in a field, birds in the air — are they not skilled weather prophets, far more reliable than any Meteorological Bureau? They don't tap a glass cylinder of mercury or write learnedly about cirrus clouds and convex cumuli. No, the cows and horses just nibble the grass on the exposed hills, the birds skate about un-

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concernedly, if the advancing gloom simply heralds a passing shower; but see them all scoot for shelter before ever a leaf is stirred if a real storm is about to break. That is pure, undiluted, unquestioning knowledge. The power of transmitting news instantly over long distances, possessed by certain human nomads, is of the same type. Therefore, my dear Karl, you hark back in the centuries. You are away down the social scale. I, an up-to-date demigod, to whom the real meaning of nearly every word I use is unknown, tell you this unblushingly."

"Is that a part of your theory that the world is still in its infancy in its search after truth?"

"Well hit, my prehistoric man, my vitalized fossil. You are old as many of the hills. Oh, if only I could put a date on you! Say, have you ever heard of Eridhu?"

"Do you mean the Chaldean city?"

"Yes. Well, six thousand years ago it was a seaport, and the sanctuary of the Chaldean god, Eâ. Now, it is a dust-heap, miles inland. A friend of mine, sorting among the rubbish last year, found a tomb. The gentleman buried therein must have been an Akkadian antiquary, who hated, even in death, to be parted from his treasures, because the brick vault containing his remains also held a variety

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of objects several thousand years older than himself."

"Are the facts quite clear?"

"Clear. Just listen to the evidence. You, as a bloated Britisher, are aware, no doubt, that the year when it first attained the dignity of record began with the vernal equinox, and the opening month was named after the 'propitious Bull'? Thus, Bull headed the twelve constellations of the zodiac, and was quite an important character. Well, in the tomb aforesaid, the excavators found a small stone urn, bearing, not Taurus, the Bull's sign, but Aquarius, the water-carrier. The sun, at the vernal equinox, has been in Aries since 2,500 B.C., and it first entered Taurus somewhere about 4,700 B.C. Lots of centuries must have been passed in observation before the astrologers formed the calendar we use to-day, so the urn could claim, at the very least, a venerable antiquity, unless it was a hoary Chaldean hoax. There is a good reason to believe it was anything but a joke. It was brought to Washington, eagerly examined by a gathering of archæologists, and dropped by some trembling enthusiast on to a marble floor."

"Good gracious!"

"Yes, the finder said something like that. Indeed, his language was even more fluent.

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Yet the accident led to a discovery. The shattered urn consisted of two vessels, one within the other. Between the two was a thin slip of ivory, and on this was a cuneiform inscription, with a lively drawing showing how one gentleman hammered a big nail into another gentleman's skull."

"Do you propose to treat me in that way?"

"I have reached my point now. That record of a crime, probably a murder of revenge, was kept secret for at least 7,000 years, and only Schlieman or Haynes could tell us how much longer. So your peculiarly constituted brain, my friend, has gone on repeating itself through many a forgotten ancestor until the accident of environment enabled its hidden recesses to burst their bonds. It took a great many clever men a great many years to decipher the cuneiform characters of the Akkadians, and you will probably be dead long before some genius yet unborn tells an anxious world why you can see things that are taking place at a distance of over three thousand miles. Meanwhile, behold in me your patient observer and chronicler. To-night —"

"To-night we shall talk and smoke, and pursue vain conceits," said Karl, determinedly. "I think I ought to forego these glimpses into the void. They are unpleasing in many ways.

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Of what personal benefit is this unusual gift? I wish to qualify myself for a commercial career, and the only practical use of such escapades as those of the two preceding nights is somewhat in the detective line. I mean to resist the impulse for the future."

"Now you are indulging in banalities. You can no more resist the occasional use of your splendid gifts than a duckling reared by a hen could hold back from a pond. And do you really think that I have written twenty pages of notes merely to fool away three hours? I guess Maggie can't be a nice girl, or it's a sure thing you would want to see her again."

Karl smiled, and in a very charming way he had of revealing his white teeth with the kindest and most good-natured expression of genuine fun.

"Even if you are smuggling at law, Frank," he said, "you should spare your friends the tricks of counsel. You fancy, and probably your belief is justified, that if I allow my mind to dwell on Miss Hutchinson's appearance, such as I have recently discovered it to be, I shall wander off hopelessly across the ocean to find her. I am sorry to disappoint you, but I am firm in my resolution to discourage these influences as much as possible."

Hooper sighed. He put away his note-book

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and viciously bit the end off a green cigar, a feat by no means so easy as the smokers of British dry weeds may imagine.

"Then let us talk of ships and kings and sealing-wax," he growled. "I am rather strong on ancient Egypt. Would you like to hear my views on Ka?"

Hooper was speaking with careless sarcasm. He was grievously annoyed that Grier should cut off a highly interesting experiment in such a summary fashion. Yet there is an unconscious art which is superior to all intent, and Hooper had blundered on to a question which set his hearer's mind in a whirl.

"Ka!" he said softly. "Surely that is what we call the soul? It is animism, the shadowy second self evoked from dreams. Yes, that is a root word, direct from the earliest mint. Man, in his first speech, described Ka."

The American veiled the joy in his eyes by a cloud of smoke.

"If I can only plunk him near the window now, he will switch on to Maggie with a jerk," was the ready reflection. But the "plunking," whatever it may mean — for your good American, when not undergoing the embalming process which finally fits him for Paris, can coin words at will — was not necessary. Karl, without effort or volition, passed through the



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umbra which separated his known senses from the sway of their unknown congener. He leaned back in his chair, closed his eyes, and was forthwith, to all appearance, sleeping lightly.

Hooper, whose nostrils quivered with repressed excitement, flung away his cigar and applied himself to the task of recording all external physical indications of the emotions his companion might be experiencing. It will be remembered that this trance-like condition was usually preceded by some slight disturbance of the blood-vessels infringing on or adjacent to the brain. There was no such sign of cerebral disorder on this occasion. Karl seemed to have yielded to a desire for a pleasant and refreshing doze.

Again, when he saw Maggie Hutchinson and the Armenian at Manhattan Beach, he had endeavored to approach nearer to them, and was only prevented by the fortunate interposition of a window-ledge and a stick stuck in a flower-pot, while his temporary flight to the storm-tossed saloon of the *Merlin* had caused him to sway in Hooper's arms. To-night he sat immovable, though he witnessed a series of really remarkable events, the sight or hearing of which would assuredly have evoked some reflex action or cry during any of his earlier manifestations.

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Luckily, there was present, in the young American, a sympathetic watcher, who, notwithstanding his comparative youth, had all the coolness and critical acumen of a hardened investigator. Hooper, true to his own theory, was convinced that he was assisting in the development of a hitherto unsuspected function in man's brain. He knew that the obscure sum of influences we call heredity affects the adult man in a surprisingly small traceable degree as compared with education. If it were possible to leave an infant, born of civilized parents, wholly to its own devices, what direct characteristics of human ancestry would it exhibit? It would possess no articulate language, its knowledge would not extend beyond the limited recognition of a few articles of food, its reasoning faculties would be a blank, its highly convoluted brain a storehouse of potentialities as hidden as the wonder of its nervous system or the chemical building of its tissue. In a word, a child which, under tuition, might become the discoverer of a new province in human thought, would sink instantly to the condition of palæolithic man. Let the key be lost which should unlock the treasury, and untold ages of horror and suffering, of seemingly endless and unavailing effort, must be endured ere it could be found again. Yet the treasure was there intact, as surely pent

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within the protoplasmic ovum as displayed in all its splendor on the printed page of the world-convincing treatise. That was the great miracle of nature, and Hooper asked himself what phase of her manifold powers was now unfolding itself before his intent yet uncomprehending eyes.

He knew that mankind to-day can produce, in facsimile, types of ancestors found in pliocene strata at least 500,000 years old. Stone knives alone could make the intentional cuts found on the ribs of a cetacean stranded on the shore of the pliocene sea, and what that meant to a prehistoric tribe is clearly shown by Lord Avebury's (Sir John Lubbock's) summary of a description by Captain Grey of a recent whale feast in Australia:

"When a whale is washed ashore it is a real godsend to them (the aborigines). Fires are lit to give notice of the joyful event. They rub themselves all over with blubber and anoint their favorite wives in the same way. Then they cut down through the blubber to the beef, which they eat raw or broil on pointed sticks. As other natives arrive they 'fairly eat their way into the whale, and you see them climbing in and about the stinking carcase, choosing tit-bits. . . . There is no sight in the world more revolting than to see a young and grace-

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fully formed girl stepping out of the interior of a putrid whale."

Hooper had plenty of time to let his imagination run riot in this wise. The light fell on Grier's face, but the watcher looked in vain for any indication of the sights or sounds in which the sleeper was participating. Karl, to outward semblance, might be either really asleep or brought to muscular rigidity by the influence of an anæsthetic. He was calm, unmoved, the lips slightly parted, with healthy color, and an easy rise and fall of the chest.

This late sitting broke the stringent college rules, but Hooper cared little for penal ordinances. Yet even he grew anxious when Karl failed to arouse himself after an hour had passed in utter silence. He was very reluctant to disturb his comrade. This present flight through space promised to transcend its predecessors in the prolonged sequence of its events. Nevertheless, there was a limit to his friend's endurance if not to his own.

When the expiration of another fifteen minutes revealed no sign of Grier's return to consciousness, Hooper did not think he was justified in permitting the trance to continue indefinitely without assuring himself, at any rate, that Grier's pulse was normal and his heart beating regularly.

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He stooped and caught Karl's wrist gently. He noticed that the breathing was slow and measured, and he had just succeeded in detecting the pulse when Karl opened his eyes.

He gave one surprised, almost bewildered glance at Hooper, laughed cheerfully when he looked at the clock on the mantelpiece, and said, in the most matter-of-fact way:

"Have you ever heard of a man named Steindal in New York?"

"Y—yes." Hooper nearly stammered, he was so taken aback by the curiously commonplace question.

"Is he connected with the stage?" went on Karl, eagerly.

"Yes, in a sense. He is a dramatic agent, I think."

"He is unquestionably a dramatic scoundrel. Why did you interfere? At the very moment I quitted him he was giving his own precious character to Constantine. Never mind! I will find the rascal and beat him to a jelly."

"Bully for you! Things have happened, then?"

"My dear Frank, I have not only seen but *heard*. Think what it means! Three thousand miles of wireless telephony! And what a first-rate brute that fellow Steindal is!"

"A regular son of a gun, I have no doubt.

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But say. I thought you had rung up Maggie Hutchinson?"

"I did not see her, thank Heaven, but I heard so much concerning her that I shall make it my business to meet the *Merlin* at Liverpool and warn her against that pair of beauties in New York."

Hooper selected a fresh and extra green cigar.

"Now, indeed, I can smoke the calumet of peace while you talk," he said, curling up in an easy chair with the comfortable *abandon* of one who has faithfully kept a long vigil.

## CHAPTER VI

### IN WHICH CONSTANTINE HAS A VISION

ALTHOUGH he had not the slightest difficulty in recounting the precise phrases of conversations and the exact details of actions which had their habitat in New York during the previous hour and a quarter, Karl did unquestionably feel the need of choosing his words when he began to tell Hooper how a new and wholly entrancing phase of his extraordinary powers was opened up by the discovery that mere distance no longer diminished his sense of hearing. It was so vitally important to be accurate. First impressions are of prime value in describing a sensation. If a man only retained his first impression of the taste of alcohol what a sober world it would be!

When his conscious intelligence quitted the room in which he and Hooper were sitting, he had no fixed objective in his mind. This fresh departure was noteworthy, and, indeed, absolutely essential to the theory propounded by Sir William Macpherson, namely, that Karl was a living installation of wireless telegraphy. If

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this rough-and-ready definition of the phenomenon were reasonably correct, it was essential that the human "station" should have the power of receiving as well as transmitting the electrical influences which called into activity its sixth sense. Hitherto Grier had, so to speak, swept the mental horizon with a searchlight, hoping or expecting to find the object he sought. Now, in a state of quiescence, yet tuned to the proper pitch by the sound of one of those strong, deep words which vibrate back to the twilight of human origins, he was encountered by another radio-active force, and became, for a time, a machine-like recorder of impressions.

After the familiar passing through darkness into light — this momentary eclipse being apparently a mechanical adjustment of the normal functions of the human to their novel requirements — he found himself a spectator of a meeting between two men in a room which was seemingly taking place in a second-floor office overlooking the junction of two busy thoroughfares.

He could hear nothing. He was in the position of an audience watching the cinematographic representation of an express train thundering through a station — there was all the realism of life and motion, but no sound. In his case, of course, there were the added illusions of color and sunlight, nor was the vision



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distracted by perplexing flutterings of a winding film.

One of the men was Constantine, tall, sallow-faced, dark-eyed, habited in evening dress, but showing an Oriental love of display by the pair of diamond studs blazing in his shirt-front, the thrilling design of his brocade waistcoat, and the braid, two inches wide, which seamed his trousers. His companion, also attired in the garb abhorred by George Bernard Shaw, was, in all save his un-American aspect (both men being unmistakably "aliens") the exact antithesis of Constantine. A short, tubby man, the product, it appeared, of a Polish Jew father and a Mexican half-caste mother, he might be likened to a human olive. He was so round, so greeny-bronze in complexion, that Karl, summing him up afterwards, said:

"When I meet him, I shall half expect to see him preserved in vinegar inside a bottle with a flamboyant label."

The two were discussing a matter of grave interest, judging by their faces. Karl made a sub-conscious effort to listen to what they were saying, but it failed, though he subsequently recalled a faint knowledge of vague sounds, as though he were endeavoring to hear through thick glass.

The room was sumptuously furnished. The

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walls were decorated with photographs, large and small, of gentlemen with wide and expressive mouths and abundant hair, and of ladies with goo-goo eyes and even more abundant hair, wearing picture hats for the most part. Several framed letters, either typewritten or hugely scrawled, were crowded together over the fireplace, and they set forth in unguarded terms the varied excellences of "Dear Steindal," or "Mr. Wilhelm Steindal," or "Wilhelm Steindal, Esq." Through the open windows Karl saw electric cars hurrying to and fro beneath, the bright steel rails commanding a clear center of the street, while the general traffic was made up of light trolleys, delivery vans and bicycles, with hardly ever a cab or private carriage. On two sides of a diminutive street lamp he read "Broadway" and "W. 22d St.," so he assumed that he had, for some occult reason, found his way to New York.

His attention was caught by the flush of anger on Constantine's face. The Armenian emphasized his comment with a passionate thump of his clenched fist on the table. Steindal, if the fat man were the recipient of those flattering letters, seemed to be expostulating. After some argument, in which Constantine was apparently brought round to the other's

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view, the olive-skinned person stretched out a pulpy hand for a code book, which he consulted, and framed a message.

And now, for the first time to his adult knowledge, Karl *purposely changed his position* without interrupting his sight of events in the least degree. That is to say, his experiments of the two previous nights had the aspect of a very vivid dream, but, on this occasion, he acted as if he had the power of physical movement. When he saw Maggie Hutchinson at Manhattan Beach he endeavored to "stoop" over the hotel table, and also to "step off" the veranda on to the grass lawn beyond, but he succeeded in neither instance.

To-day, except that his body was in Oxford, he fancied he had complete liberty of movement in New York.

So he passed behind Constantine's companion, looked over his shoulder, and read what he had written. The words "Margaret Hutchinson" stood out clearly from a jumble of nonsense. Karl had never used a code, and the meaningless nature of the script puzzled him until he saw that the writer had jotted down sentences opposite each word on a separate sheet of paper. Perusal of this key soon made the message coherent. It read:

"Meet the Merlin on arrival at Liverpool

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on the 10th inst. Offer Miss Margaret Hutchinson star concert at St. James's Hall in my name, and promise her prolonged engagement on good terms for exclusive contract, Steindal."

There was an evil leer on Steindal's face when he read the draft to Constantine, and the unpleasant smile with which the latter showed his curt approval warned Grier that an ulterior purpose lay behind an offer which, under ordinary circumstances, should prove very acceptable to any girl at the outset of a professional career. Karl was eager to learn more of the compact into which these two had entered, but, strive as he might, he could only distinguish certain faint, quick, vibrating noises which had a vague resemblance to taps on a cymbal. He did not realize, until later, that he was, even then, extending his range of hearing, and the sounds he caught were the clanging bells of the street-cars!

Steindal summoned an assistant, gave him the cablegram, with instructions, and Constantine and he, donning dust-coats, descended to the street. It was a perfect joy to Karl to discover that he could accompany them. They were taken down by an elevator — which smacks of Cork though it is pure American — and passed out into the street.

And then Karl Grier's sixth sense took its

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first ride on a Broadway car! Being on the up-town track it was crowded with the latest flight of business people.

"Did the conductor take your fare and ring you up on the indicator? Anyhow, he would say things if you tried to work in a sixpence for a dime," cried Hooper, when Karl reached this part of his story; and the spirit passenger confessed to a singular dread of being in the way of the men and women who were standing between the seats and clinging on to the straps.

This was a somewhat remarkable instance of a mental record of a purely physical sensation. Once he began to roam about during his trances he had to learn that matter and space did not exist for him in their every-day acceptance.

The car swung round a curve into Madison Square, crossed 23d Street, swept past a number of fine hotels, shops, newspaper offices, and theaters, passed under a section of the elevated railway, and clanged its rapid way towards newer New York.

At last Constantine and Steindal alighted opposite a spacious restaurant, and Grier, being a ghost of quick perception, saw that even a rich man like the Armenian would use the street-car in preference to a brougham, because it was much safer and twice as speedy.

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He went with the pair up the steps of the restaurant and noted the deferential smirk of the head waiter. Nothing would have pleased him more than to play some prank on this flunky, but the means did not exist, so he perforce rested content with a careful scrutiny of his surroundings. In another week or two the patrons of this fashionable eating-house would be scattered over the cooler parts of the earth. Already the attendance was thin, but there were sufficient diners to warrant the cosmopolitan claims of America's chief city.

All speculation on this and kindred matters was, however, suddenly extinguished by a subtle, immensely remote, yet quite distinct sound of harmonious music. And then, with an exquisite delight that was almost painful in its intensity, he became aware that he was listening to the strains of a band playing one of Strauss's waltzes. With each few bars the lilt of the composition became clearer, the orchestration more defined, until he could distinguish the violins, the piano, the piccolo, and, finally, the clarionets.

His brain reeled under the intensity of this new emotion, and there was some danger that he might react into physical consciousness, had not a voice whispered, at exceedingly close quarters:

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"Dot *schwein-hund* Steindal says we cahnd gook a *poulet en casserole* worth a cent."

It was the deferential head waiter murmuring confidences to the manager!

So the music had bridged the void! He could hear as well as see across the Atlantic! Again had that strange gift of language prepared the way for the exercise of an unknown faculty. Rhythm, singing, those inarticulate sounds which Noiré calls *clamor concomitans*, were the first utterances of primitive man when working in concert. Every savage race sings and dances, whether in peace or war. Uncivilized men work best when they can sing. In olden days soldiers sang as they marched against the enemy, and civilization has only substituted the bugles and drums for the songs.

Beyond all question the unfettered exercise of Karl's additional sense, that marvelous adjunct whereby his visual and auricular nerves annihilated distance, arose from the chance that an orchestra, mainly consisting of stringed instruments, struck up a measured cadence at a moment when Karl was actually straining his faculties to obtain some more precise notion of all that was taking place.

And now Grier, who was somewhat in the position of an operator controlling some rarely sensitive electrical apparatus, learnt that he

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must focus the instrument with delicate precision if he were to avoid confusion. So he bent his attention on the pair at the table, seated himself metaphorically astride the iced cantaloup which decorated the center of their board, and gathered in each word they uttered, with the added zest of seeing the wary glances, the twitching nostrils, the drawn lips.

Steindal had ordered a meal with the air of a connoisseur. That he had not exercised much tact in conveying his wants to the head waiter has been proved by the latter's private opinion whispered in New York and overheard in Oxford.

But Constantine merely toyed with the banquet, and his nervous state of preoccupation only increased as the champagne rose to his head.

"I believe that girl will bring me bad luck," was the first connected phrase he uttered which Karl could associate with Maggie Hutchinson's personality, granted that she was the unseen attraction drawing him across the Atlantic. How well he remembered the Armenian's voice, though a decade had passed since the last time he had heard it on board the P. & O. steamship *Ganges*, in Tilbury Dock, when Constantine gave him a gold watch and chain. The watch was ticking in his waistcoat pocket at that very



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moment, but the chain, being of a size that provoked caustic undergraduate humor, lay in a drawer.

"Bad luck! There's no such thing, *amigo mio*! Bad management? Yes, it abounds, but, where women are concerned, I flatter myself that I know the sex. Fair, frail, and fickle, dark, deep, and *da capo*—that's how I classify 'em."

This new voice was that of an unctuous devil. Grier, with his finely tuned ear for vocal effects, fancied that a boa-constrictor might speak with such a voice. It was the oil in the man-olive which gave his speech its smoothness.

Steindal laughed softly at his own cheap wit, but Constantine was not amused.

"I tell you, Steindal," he said, "that you do not understand the nature of a girl brought up in the home atmosphere which surrounded Maggie Hutchinson. Damn it, man, it is that sanctity of hers which renders her attractive to me. What is a pretty face or a fairy-like figure? A mere commodity, a 'cheap lot, slightly soiled' in the catalogue of life. *That's* the sort of woman *you* have in your mind, and I don't want her."

"Sanctity, at Maggie's age, consists of soap and water and a soft skin. We have a Spanish proverb: '*el corazón manda las carnes*' — the

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heart controls the body, and I know that when a woman's desires outrun her means she begins to weigh her scruples to see if they are really as heavy as she fancies. Just let Maggie Hutchinson taste success, popularity, the delights of money-spending, and then withdraw the pleasant cup before she has drunk too deeply! Bah! Don't talk to me of sanctity! To the man of the world, *es de vidrio la mujer* — woman is made of glass!"

Steindal, scoffing in the complacency of his knowledge, tilted some champagne down his wide throat. Karl, feverishly anxious to discover what plot these twentieth century ghouls were hatching against a young and innocent girl, concentrated his thoughts on Constantine with some reminiscence of that masterfulness he exhibited as a boy on board the *Ganges*.

He carried his intent too far. Constantine suddenly grew livid with fear. He turned in his chair, gazed at the floor, and sprawled over the table, sweeping glass and plates away with a crash.

"Look!" he shrieked in an eerie falsetto. "Can't you see that shark deep down there in the black water? It will devour me! Oh, help, help!"

## CHAPTER VII

### "BLOOD IS A VERY PECULIAR JUICE"

You know what people think when a man screams out that a shark is threatening him from the black depths of the parquet flooring of a fashionable dining-room. And a shark is a most uncommon feature of such manifestations. Usually the disturbing vision is a rat, or a green imp with red eyes, or even a squirming snake. Indeed, reptiles figure so often in alcoholic apparitions that I have often wondered why there are not more frequent "scenes" in the London Strand, owing to the presence on the kerb of a number of street vendors who cause make-believe serpents to wriggle all day long on a small board.

Several ladies rose with startled cries. A passing waiter was so unnerved that he dropped a laden tray, and the crash added to the alarm of those seated at a distance, to whom the hubbub, but not its cause, was audible. The band stopped playing, a clarinet breaking off with a funny squeak in the middle of a cadenza, and, adding fuel each instant to the wild-fire

### "BLOOD IS A VERY PECULIAR JUICE"

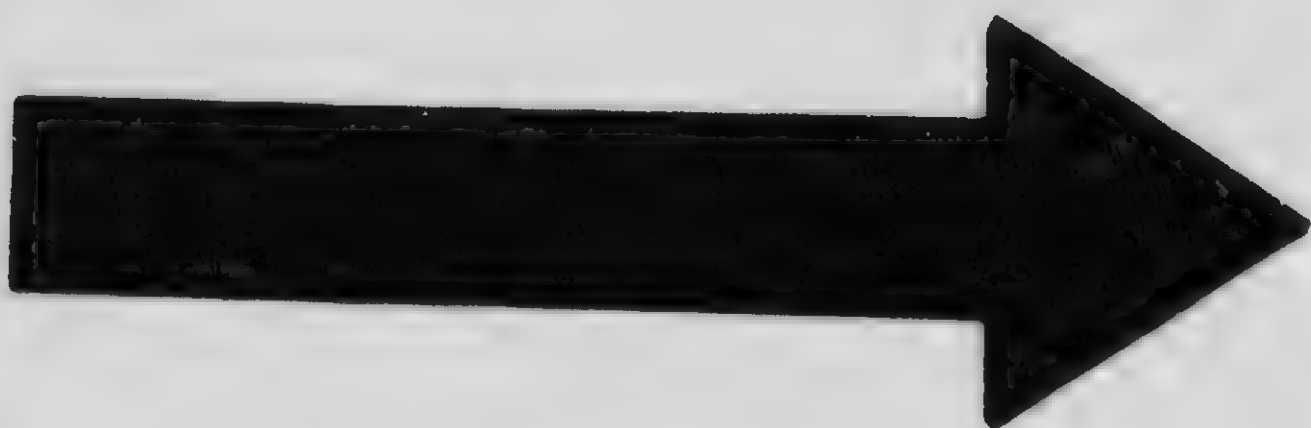
cominotion, Constantine sprawled over the table and yelled for succor.

Wilhelm Steindal, convinced that his companion had suddenly gone mad, showed that he was endowed with some of the grit essential to a scoundrel of any real importance. He picked up a carafe of iced water, and dashed the contents into the Armenian's gray-green face, being prepared to follow up the attack with the bottle itself, if needful. He acted better than he knew. The physical shock of the liquid dissipated the magnetic influence which Karl had unwittingly exercised on the man he had rescued from the Bay of Bengal. Forthwith, Constantine recovered his self-possession. He mopped his dripping face with a serviette, apologized to the astounded manager and those diners seated near, and went out, followed by Steindal.

The latter was too flustered to garnish his speech with Spanish phrases, a habit he affected in order to disguise the Polish-Jew element in his composition. Indeed, his language now savored more of the Bowery than of Spanish America.

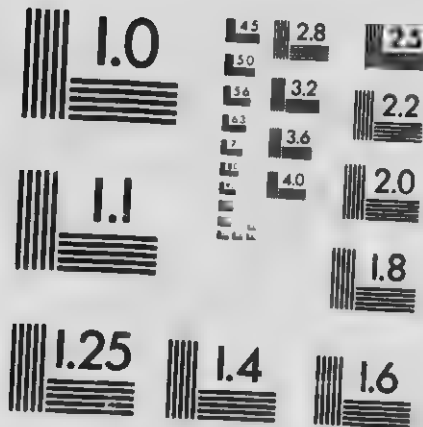
"Wot'n hell did you go'n kick up that sort of circus for?" he growled, his shining face exuding oil in his excitement.

"I couldn't help it. I was overpowered by a — by a memory."



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KARL GRIER

"It was a tomfool performance, anyhow. Seems to me it'll be all round N'York that Steindal was out at a skate wid some flea-sucked blighter who had brought into the country a new variety of jim-jams!"

"Look here, Steindal, I may be afraid of some things, but I have no fear of you. If you talk to me in that fashion, I'll smash your face."

Constantine looked so murderous that the stout man retreated a pace, and a stalwart hall-porter moved ponderously forward. The Jew felt he had gone too far. The Armenian was too rich a prize to be flung aside because he had created a scene in a restaurant and spoiled a good dinner.

So he cried, with ready complacency:

"Don't get mad with me, dere's a good fella. I only wanted to shake up your wits a bit. Come on! Here's your hat. Let's walk round to your hotel. You'll soon be all right. *Car-ramba!* You scared me worse'n you scared yourself."

Up-town in New York you can turn out of a brilliantly lighted and crowded avenue into a side street of utmost quietude. The two passed into one of these convenient thoroughfares, and were instantly removed from the glare of the restaurant.

"BLOOD IS A VERY PECULIAR JUICE"

Steindal halted to light a cigarette. He eyed the Armenian covertly.

"Tell you what," he chuckled, "thinkin' of that girl has put you off your base."

"No, you are mistaken. Something altogether different upset me. I can't explain matters to you here. Wait till I've had a high-ball in my room. Then I'll give you the lines of it. You need have no fear of a further outbreak. I'm all right now. And you've got strong nerves, eh?"

"I need 'em my boy, in my business. I'm a peach on nerves. In the profession they call me 'The electrocutioner,' because I can stiffen a contract in five seconds. *Por Dios! Nerves!*"

His gurgling laugh surged in Karl's ears as Hooper awakened him. Steindal and Constantine had not yet reached Sixth Avenue from Broadway ere the two young men in far-away Oxford were eagerly discussing the incidents of the preceding hour and a quarter in New York.

For once, the scientific necromancy of Karl's flights through space failed to enlist all their attention. Hooper, no less than Grier, was thrilled by the thought that his friend had been drawn by some subtle magnetic influence to participate, in many ways save actual presence,



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in a conclave of such grave significance to a girl whose fortunes already interested them.

And it is, perhaps requisite, here and now, to protest against the smile of supercilious incredulity with which some may read of the earnestness betrayed by these youthful collegians.

It is a fact of common knowledge that a telephone company, sufficiently enlightened to endeavor to please its customers, has arranged for a board of directors, consisting of three men in New York, two in Baltimore, and one in Philadelphia, to sit in their respective offices, holding the combined receiver and transmitter to ear and mouth, and conduct a board meeting, to all intents and purposes as efficiently as if they were gathered in the same room. Company directors, or others resident in London, Birmingham, and Liverpool, could do exactly the same thing if the British telephone officials did not require an earthquake followed by a month's deliberation before they would undertake to provide the necessary facilities.

It is exceedingly probable that, in a few years, the same instrument which permits speech and hearing over practically unlimited distance will carry a "seeing" apparatus as well. Will the scientific miracle be any the more explicable because a certain quantity of

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insulated copper wire intervenes between the persons seeing, hearing, and speaking to each other? I am tempted into this disquisition because, as it happens, the direct outcome of the conversations between the two sets of men (than whom the English-speaking world could scarce produce four persons more opposed in personal characteristics) was the introduction of myself, the writer of this memoir, into the affair. Early in life, journalism had taken me to India, where I met Karl's father. He was a man after my own heart. Many times, when the business of his tea estate brought him to Calcutta, I had dined with him in the "Wilson-'otel," the strange name by which alone the *gharri-wala* knows the Great Eastern Hotel, or he had been carried off from the Red Road by me to my own apartment overlooking Chowringhee and the smooth, tree-dotted *maidan* that stretches towards Fort William and the river.

And you will guess readily what we poor exiles talked of while the ice clinked in the long glasses and the blue smoke-rings of Bangalore cheroots rose to the ceiling. He of his wife and child, I of a deluded girl waiting in England until the rupee recovered from the heat-wave which melted silver — Heavens! How we flung those topics back and forth, like two

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tennis-players battering a ball. And we never bored each other. Each man was far too thankful to have a sympathetic listener to be weary of the other's stories.

So, in that way, I knew a great deal of Karl, and when, years having passed, and the afore-said girl (the rupee having long since steadied itself at 1s. 4d.) being gone to visit her mother in Devonshire with our young hopeful, I decided to indulge in a long deferred trip to Oxford, it was only natural that I should seek out the son of my old Indian crony, and ask him to guide my steps along the ancient paths of "the home of lost causes and impossible beliefs."

The odd thing was that no man in Britain was more prepared to give credence to Karl's "visions" than myself. I had long since read Sir William Macpherson's book, and constructed Frank Hooper's theory of the definite bounds of human inventiveness out of my own thought-producing laboratory. "Blut ist ein ganz be-rer saft!" said old Mephisto, when he led Faust into signing his soul away with his own blood, and the same "peculiar juice" of the Celtic stream ran in Grier's veins and in my own. Moreover, Grier *père* had told me of the adventures of Grier *filis* in the matter of the Hutchinson Raid and the saving

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of Constantine, so it was another of the strange coincidences of life that brought a note from me, ensconced in the Mitre Inn, to Karl at his college on the morning after his excursion to Steindal's office and the Broadway restaurant,

Grier and Hooper come to me during the afternoon. Instead of admiring the glories of Oxford, I had the recital of recent events poured into my willing ears as we sat together in my private sitting-room on the first floor. Dear me! how the years slipped back as I listened. The rounded tree-tops and gracious spires of the English University town did not differ so greatly from the dim outlines of the palatial city on the left bank of the Hughli. What a mere hand-span is a vanished decade! The magic carpet of Tangu, which instantaneously transported its possessor whither he wished to go, was not a more wonderful vehicle than a man's memory. And Karl, even thus early in life, had a way of talking that compelled attention. He spoke to the point, in simple words. Evidently he had a horror of exaggeration. His explanations were clear, logical, as a proposition of Euclid, and he was hardly ever at a loss for a simile when illustrating one of the less easily understood features of his new and extraordinary force.

Being his senior by a good many years, I

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thought it my duty to point out the hazardous nature of these excursions into the unknown. I was fascinated by his story, of course, together with Hooper's singularly definite corroboration of its chief features, yet I feared lest such playing with nervous excitability might result in paralysis or mental trouble.

But Karl's cheery laugh reassured me.

"I have taken a very precise set of notes of a lecture on Seismic Waves this morning," he said, "and at this very moment I could break that poker across my knee. There's little wrong with my brains, and still less with my muscles, I can assure you."

He leaned forward, picked up the poker, and examined it critically. It was an old-fashioned, heavy implement, with its point sharpened by years of forgetfulness, which, in pokerdom, takes the form of slow consumption in sulky fires.

"Now that I come to examine it, I don't think I can break it. Being honest wrought iron, it will bend into a hoop. But I'll polarize it, by way of a change."

He pulled up his coat sleeves, and turned back the cuffs of his shirt so as to bare his wrists. Then holding the poker point downwards on the hearthrug, he began to stroke it softly with the tips of his fingers and thumbs.

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His hands were white, long-fingered, and finely molded, his wrists square and hard. Looking at him, watching the smile playing on his eager face, and the athletic poise of his body as he kept the poker from falling, I was struck by his physical resemblance to the Vatican Discobolus, with its wonderful combination of repose at the completion of the backward movement of the thrower, and of action at the commencement of the powerful forward cast.

But such thoughts were dispelled by the uncanny antics of the poker. It was broad daylight, and any sleight-of-hand performance was out of the question in every sense. Yet both Hooper and I myself saw Karl withdraw his support from the poker, continuing the stroking movement in the air, and gradually widening the distance between his hands.

And the poker did not fall! It stood there immovable, as though its point were stuck in the floor through the rug. At first I candidly admit that I was certain Grier had found a hole in the carpet which coincided with a crack in the flooring. But when he inclined the imaginary axis of his hands, thus changing the direction of the magnetic current that flowed between them, the poker adjusted its poise to the new line of force. It described circles, leaned over at impossible angles, lifted itself fully a foot in

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the air, and twice traced in space the figure of a Maltese cross. I lay stress on this simple yet peculiar manifestation of Karl's powers, because it was the first instance of them which had actually come under my personal notice.

Certainly I was amazed, and even Hooper, notwithstanding the marvels he had witnessed, expressed his surprise at the new feature of his friend's astounding qualities.

"I can't explain why I should have the gift of magnetic induction," laughed Karl. "I discovered it accidentally one day when I was making an experiment with a freely suspended needle to determine a magnetic meridian. I became very interested, the adjustment required delicate manipulation, and suddenly my hands went cold, while the needle followed their movements. Feel my hands now!"

I caught his right hand. It was so icy to the touch that I believe I started.

"I really think I could magnetize your hands," he went on. "Shall I try?"

Naturally, I agreed. Without permitting the poker to fall, he commenced to stroke my hands from the finger-tips to the wrists. Soon I felt a sensation akin to plunging them into snow. And behold, when he quitted me, that most eccentric of pokers yielded to *my* blandishments!

But in my case a more orthodox circulation

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quickly shattered the magnetic axis. In a few seconds the poker tottered, and would have fallen had I not caught it. The marked diminution of temperature experienced while I was under the influence of Karl's electric energy was not the least interesting feature of a curious incident, seeing that it is an axiom of the classroom that all magnetic phenomena vanish completely if a magnet be made red-hot!

All this has astonishingly little to do with the more exciting personal affairs of a charming young lady like Maggie Hutchinson. But it is reasonable to suppose that Karl, anxious to secure the counsel of an older man, thought fit to show this imaginary Solo how necessary faith was to the performance of good works, and it is in this same spirit of convincing the incredulous that I have related the trivial yet quite extraordinary poker-balancing of that summer's afternoon in the Mitre Hotel, Oxford.



## CHAPTER VIII

### MAGGIE HUTCHINSON INTERVENES

"WHEN you two have finished your parlor-tricks," said Hooper, endeavoring to copy a judicial eye-glare he had seen used by the Lord Chief Justice, "this committee will proceed to the business of the sitting."

It was, indeed, necessary for our budding lawyer to recall our wandering thoughts to the affairs of the girl whom we believed to be then half-way across the Atlantic on a journey to the British Isles. We might accept Karl's mediumistic statements to the fullest extent, not only reading into them the literal significance of the conversations and scenes he reported, but also paying heed to the logical outcome of these episodes; yet there were serious difficulties in the way of applying the information thus acquired.

Put baldly, what would Karl say to Miss Margaret Hutchinson, who was presumably accompanied by her mother, if he went to meet the *Merlin* at Liverpool?

Let us, in imagination, reconstruct the incident, after the manner beloved of the French

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*jugé d'instruction.* The great liner draws up to her berth at the landing-stage. Gangways are lowered, and there is a frantic rush of passengers to enter the Customs shed, though the last philosopher who walks placidly ashore knows that his luggage will be decorated with little printed crowns in ample time to permit him to travel to London by the same train that conveys the first triumphant struggler.

Hovering between a portion of a wall marked "H" and the ticket barrier of the railway station will be found Maggie and her mama, both looking exceedingly well after the voyage, and in a state of repressed excitement arising from the conviction innate in every woman's soul that she will never see her boxes again, once they have been so carelessly mixed up with other people's belongings.

Karl, exercising a degree of tact blended with silver, obtains admission to the enclosure, and recognizes Maggie at once, having seen her ten days ago at Manhattan Beach.

But it is fully ten years since Maggie last saw him, so there occurs a social embarrassment in the nature of what our sporting friends call a "bull finch." Nevertheless, Karl, having ingratiating manners, and being really an old friend and the son of Mrs. Hutchinson's special crony, surmounts the obstacle, and is received with

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enthusiasm tempered by a certain shyness on Maggie's part (her memory of youthful caresses becoming clearer each instant) and by speculation on the part of mama as to the reason which induced this very good-looking and well-dressed young man to come all the way to Liverpool to meet them.

Clearly, Karl must talk platitudes about the weather, the fine sea-going qualities of the *Merlin*, the ridiculousness of all Customs examinations, or any other inane topic at the outset; it would never do to plunge straight off into the occult cause of his presence. Moreover, the train leaves for London in five minutes, and hosts of acquaintances, some of long standing, others of the ship-board or moth variety, exchange cheery greetings as they pass.

"I suppose you are staying in Liverpool, Mr. Grier?" says Mrs. Hutchinson at last, and Karl is impelled to say that he intends to accompany them to London, when, at this critical state of affairs, there enters the villain of the play in the shape of Steindal's agent with a contract in his hand and a stylographic pen in his waistcoat pocket.

After all is said and done, pretty Miss Margaret is making music her profession, the Darjeeling tea-garden not having proved a great success; and what chance does Karl, with his

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visions, stand against Steindal, the concert director of international fame? For the great "Wilhelm" has risen from the dramatic agency in which Hooper had heard of him to the higher level of controlling the *maestri*, *prime donne*, and other prodigies of that strange world which finds all its inspiration in the first seven letters of the alphabet. His influence is so far-reaching, his verdict accepted so unhesitatingly by managers and publishers, that not many stars in the musical firmament can move in orbits apart from Steindal. For a novice to attain notoriety without his assistance would be almost impossible. Both mother and daughter have already been taught by bitter experience that one must move circumspectly where such a man is concerned, and, above all things, not dare to interfere with plans he has made for professional advancement. So, when Karl would urge Maggie to refuse the highly advantageous offer made by Steindal's London agent — who had actually come from London to press it on his client's acceptance — both the girl and her mother must regard him as somewhat akin to a lunatic.

The more mysteriously accurate the statements he made concerning recent events on the other side of the Atlantic, the less the ladies would regard their value from the common-sense point of view. Mrs. Hutchinson, of course,

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remembered the escape from death she and her husband, and probably her child, owed to Karl's intervention years ago in India. But that was a "strange dream," a "queer coincidence," and any one who permitted her life to be governed by such supernatural revelations must either be distinguished by Providence outside the plane of ordinary mortals or be qualifying speedily for the "dangerous" ward in an asylum.

All this, and more, did I set forth temperately before my young friends. They agreed with me, Hooper completely, and Grier with reservations.

"My advice is that you ask your mother to communicate with Mrs. Hutchinson and her daughter," I said. "It will surely follow that you all meet in London or elsewhere, and you will have no difficulty in leading up to a disclosure of your knowledge in what may be described as a reasonable and convincing manner. They will be surprised, of course, but they will be forewarned if evil is contemplated. It is not that Steindal's help will be injurious to Miss Hutchinson. He has brought out a great many eminent artistes, and the public regard his introduction of a newcomer as a sort of hallmark on precious metal. Moreover, long before any nefarious plot can mature, you may have information of a far more convincing sort."

"Exactly," broke in Hooper. "I told Karl

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last night that he was in for a series of first-rate biograph adventures now. He can't avoid 'em. It is perfectly evident that Constantine will ring him up at any hour of the day or night. Great Scott! What a world it will be when we all possess a telelog number!"

We ignored the new word, and neither Karl nor I had as yet hit on "telegnomy."

"I suppose you are right," said Karl, submissively. "When a journalist and a lawyer come to dissect a modern miracle they leave precious little of its mysticism. But there is one thing you ought to do. You, Frank, as an eye-witness, to a certain extent, should set down in writing all that has taken place and all that I have told you, while our friend here can affix his signature as further testimony of its truth."

"Holy gee! Do you think I have missed a word of it?" cried Hooper, triumphantly producing his note-book.

"This is only the first chapter of a romance," I said.

"It may be the end as well as the beginning," was Grier's quiet comment. "Do not forget that many years have elapsed between these different excitations of a faculty I cannot control. Last night I advanced a long stage in my attainments, and it is possible my extra sense may disappear as rapidly as it has developed."

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"I cannot agree with you," said I. "The history of your gradual extension of power seems rather to prove the opposite contention. By a slow and well-marked process, nature has perfected in you an amazing apparatus which probably heralds the advent of some mechanical contrivance far beyond the range of our present knowledge. Why should she suddenly destroy that which she has taken so long to fashion? It is unquestionable that birthmarks on human beings are produced by a curiously simple variant of the photographic lens. I have seen the dial of a clock reproduced in a girl's eyes, the clear drawing of a rose on a child's shoulder. Such pre-natal photographs are not common, but they have always been and will continue to be, while the human race possesses its present characteristics."

"I would be better content if some other subject were chosen for this new demonstration," said he.

"Oh, cheer up, Grier!" cried Hooper. "For all you know, you may be the last of the Mohicans. I was reading Pliny's description of the 'Agate of Pyrrhus' the other day. Ever hear of it? No! Well, you have seen polished agates, and any one can find amusement in discovering heads, figures, animals, even landscapes in them. A good specimen is called a

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'gamaheu,' and Pliny's agate was a rip-snorter. It contained the Nine Muses with Apollo in the midst of them. Having attained the dignity of classic art, poor old nature grew tired, and now we have nary a gamaheu."

"You are scoffing," I said indignantly. "Let us adjourn the session. I came here to see Oxford, not to indulge in physiolatry."

"The fact is that you are surfeited with wonders," retorted Hooper. "It is a common failing of the species. Think what a supreme genius was the first pithecoïd man who invented a wheel, who used fire, who fashioned a bow! How we ought to grovel at the mere mention of the great unknown who perceived that the other beasts were created to serve mankind!"

I rang for a waiter. Lager beer alone could quench this young sage's enthusiasm.

Perhaps Grier had exhausted some accumulation of nervous force, perhaps the supply cells of the electric waves which carried sight and sound across the Atlantic were unequal just then to sustained calls on their resources, but, whatever the reason, it is certain that he was untroubled by visions, waking or asleep, during several days. I prolonged my visit to Oxford, passing all the available time in Karl's company, and, more often than not, Hooper was with us.



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The latter tried every artifice, especially during the undisturbed eventide, to induce in his companion that which he considered the fitting conditions for a telegnomic trance.

"Guess Maggie's feelin' fine an' dandy by this time," he would say, after alluding to the "sickening monotony" of the first days at sea.

Or again:

"Wonder if Steindal is going to Delmonico's to-night? It's a sure thing he'll give the other place a distant nod of recognition for some time to come."

But it was of no avail.

Once there was a chance of success. We were talking of the uselessness of certain lines of thought, and I instanced as an example of fallacious reasoning the famous problem of John of Salisbury:

"When a hog is driven to market with a rope round his neck does the man or the rope take him?"

"I read Plato a good deal," said Hooper, "and there are times when I more than half suspect him of asking a question akin to that with his tongue in his check."

"That is because you have a small head, Frank," said Karl. "Plato was a broad man. Indeed, his proper name was Aristocles, and he was called Platon, the broad-shouldered

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one, as a nickname. Hence, I should credit him with a big head, and big-headed men lead in intellect. Observe, *I* have a big head. My size in hats is seven and a quarter. My natural modesty prevents me from drawing further conclusions."

"That fellow Constantine has a small head, I fancy?" murmured Hooper, with a quick sidelong glance at me.

"Yes, I think so. Oh, yes, I am sure. It is hatchet-shaped, with the animal propensities dominant and yet a certain intellectuality of forehead, aided, perhaps, by the large, dark eyes. . . . But Steindal! He has a head modelled like an egg, a type curiously capable of the highest and most debased attributes."

He was silent after that. Hooper signalled to me to remain stolid as a Red Indian. But Karl soon moved restlessly.

"You fellows imagine I am on the verge of a new display," he cried with a certain impatience. "I don't say it is impossible, but there is something holding me back. I don't deny that I tried just then to send forth an investigating ray. But nothing happened, not even the preliminary umbra."

He was fretful this evening, annoyed that the power should apparently have escaped him. He dreaded, I believe, lest the tremendous strain of the incidents in the Broadway restau-

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rant should have permanently impaired the hyper-sensitive membranes and nerve-cells which were called into play.

None of us had the slightest suspicion of what had really happened, namely, that Karl himself, by perplexing his ordinary faculties with doubts anent pretty Maggie Hutchinson, had set up a hostile influence (using the phrase solely in its magnetic meaning) which temporarily benumbed the delicate organism of his sixth sense.

It took him some time to acquire the exact poise of mental placidity most favorable to the exercise of his unique faculties. Meanwhile, a startling confirmation of his "visions" came in a very unexpected and prosaic manner.

Hooper and I were awaiting him at the door of the *Mitre*, a drive to Woodstock being the order of the afternoon, when Karl came to us in a great hurry, his lips apart, and his big blue eyes shining with excitement.

"Say," whispered Hooper, "the *Merlin* has arrived and things have happened."

And Karl had actually received this most surprising telegram from his mother in Scotland:

"Mrs. Hutchinson and daughter Maggie arrive in England to-day from States. They proceed direct to Pall Mall Hotel, London, and are most anxious to see you at once. Wire them and me. With love, Mother."

## CHAPTER IX

### THE CONFOUNDED HOTEL CLERK

"WHOOOP!" shouted the American, joyously. "Didn't I tell you things were going to hum? You stand on me! Steindal, Constantine and Co. haven't a dog's chance!"

I pointed out that such unseemly behavior at the door of a busy hotel in the High was likely to cause unpleasant comment, if, indeed, it did not excite proctorial wrath, and he retorted that a freeborn Yankee was entitled to unfurl the Stars and Strips on all such occasions as seemed personally fitting. In fact, we both were very elated by the really remarkable confirmation of Karl's story given by Mrs. Grier's telegram, and we exhibited our emotions after the manner of our respective kith.

Though we Anglo-Saxons, the Siamese twins of the Atlantic, are so closely bound together by the ties of speech and history, though the best blood of Britain has been generously given to the building up of the great nation of the west, there are differences of temperament, probably induced by climate, which

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divide us into well-marked varieties of the human family. Thus, while Hooper did not hesitate to express his wordy delight, and with animated face and lively movement exhibit the dynamic energy called into play by Karl's announcement, I strove to stiffen myself into a passable representation of a wooden image. I suppose we Britons do that sort of thing because we think that sort of thing is the correct thing, don'chyno.

You have but to cross the Atlantic a few times to obtain clear mind-pictures of the expansive Jonathan and the bovine Bull. An American liner puts off from Pier 14 in the Hudson River and swings slowly in the stream until her nose points towards the Statue of Liberty. Look back at the wharf banked high with people, and see the innumerable little flags, the countless handkerchiefs, signalling frantic farewells! That is enthusiasm! If Brown and his wife set forth for Europe, Smith, Jones, and Robinson and their respective wives gather on the steamer to see the Browns off. There is a lot of excitement, flowers, and flag-wagging — perhaps some furtive tears — but, anyhow, an honest display of unbridled human nature. Then see that same vessel edging away from Southampton quay, and note the guarded leave-taking of those rare individuals who de-

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part so greatly from British traditions as to speed their voyaging friends as far as the ship's gangway. The last time I was there, a dozen of us, cowering behind rain-swept railway trucks, had journeyed from London to see off a whole ship's company. Do you fancy we flagged anybody, or waved handkerchiefs, or yelled cheery messages? Not we! We watched the steamer disappearing into a squall and then eyed each other suspiciously, if not with active hostility; while some of us negotiated for the only available cab.

Yet it is all gammon, this seeming stoicism, a smug respectability which "goes well," as the milliners say, with a silk hat and an umbrella. Indeed, if for "climate" you read "umbrella," you have what Max Müller would call the "root concept" of my philosophy. John adapts his garments to suit his uncertain weather, and he carries this covering-up method into all the affairs of life.

Certain explanations to the authorities procured permission for Karl to go to London. I accompanied him in the time-honored rôle of *amicus curiæ*, but Hooper, of his own accord, said it would be more seemly if he were held in reserve as one who could offer confirmatory evidence if it were required.

Three hours after the receipt of Mrs. Grier's

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telegram we were at the inquiry office of the Pall Mall Hotel. It was then 6 P.M.

"The *Merlin* is not in yet," said the hotel clerk, in the curt, off-hand manner which the Londoner is beginning to learn from his American fellow-official.

"Not in yet!" I gasped. "Why, man, we received a message hours ago at Oxford concerning people on board."

"That is more than we have done."

He made pretence to be exceedingly busy with a ledger; but prolonged ill-usage by ticket examiners, platform inspectors, and the rest of the Jacks in office who seldom know much about their duties, has hardened me.

"Are you so overworked that you cannot attend to me, or shall I ask Mr. Schmidt's assistance?" I demanded.

Now here I have given you a most useful tip. Always ascertain the name of the manager of the hotel. The prompt, familiar reference to the august "Schmidt" — whom I did not know — warned the clerk that here might be some person of importance, worthy to be on terms of intimacy with the great gun of the Pall Mall Hotel. He groveled, closing the ledger carefully lest the bag should annoy me further.

"I beg your pardon, sir. I hope you did

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not misunderstand me," he said, smiling — oh, how I hate that false smirk — "the *Merlin* was signaled from Queenstown yesterday, but she has not reached Liverpool. We place a notice in the vestibule the moment we have any news, and the telegram itself states — what time — the special — Excuse me, sir, but your friend —"

Karl was standing by my side during the brief colloquy with the clerk. I saw the pert Londoner's eyes droop. His lips parted and whitened, his voice faltered, his demeanor was that of Richard III on the eve of the battle of Bosworth Field. I half expected to hear him yelp:

My conscience hath a thousand several tongues  
And every tongue brings in a several tale,  
And every tale condemns me for a villain.

I gazed anxiously at my companion, and became partly aware of what had happened. Karl had magnetized the clerk! In another instant the dapper little man would be crawling over the counter, looking up with uncomprehending terror at the Jove-like being who bent those lightning shafts on him.

I caught Karl by the arm. Instantly the concentrated energy which had shrunk the pupils of his eyes to pin-points relaxed, the re-



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lieved motor and sensory nerves returned to their ordinary functions, and he looked benignly at the quivering clerk, whom he had not seen at all during the transient oblivion of his surroundings.

"It is all right," he said, turning towards me. "A railway porter has just told Maggie that the train will leave the landing-stage station in twenty minutes. In fact, at this moment she is talking to Steindal's representative, a man named Bocci. And, do you know, from what she said I imagine —"

I caught the clerk listening now with a rabbit-eared amazement that nearly equaled his previous alarm. I was sorry for him. He must be in a state of agitation somewhat akin to the flutterings of a sparrow rescued from the deadly fascination of a snake.

So I laughed, with the best assumption of the actor's art of which I was capable.

"Let him off, Karl!" I cried. "The next time we seek information I am sure he will give it to us readily."

Karl took my cue and grinned in concert. I led him away to a lounge, but, ever and anon, the clerk watched us from the corner of his eye, and I chortled to see him comparing the clock with the time stated on a telegram which reached him a few minutes later, wherein the

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departure of the *Merlin* special was announced in exact concord with Karl's statement.

Meanwhile I learnt what had taken place. No sooner had Grier heard the unexpected fact of the steamer's non-arrival than he, quite carelessly, "sent out," as he phrased it, to find Maggie and the ship. He experienced no difficulty this time. He saw the girl and her mother standing in a huge shed and conversing with a foreign-looking person. Through several doors he distinguished the brass-rimmed port-holes and white rails of a large vessel, and he heard a hum of voices, the clanking of cranes, and the tramping of many feet.

"From what I gathered," he said, "Signor Bocci was surprised, even annoyed, to learn that Miss Hutchinson was not prepared to accept at once the contract which Steindal offered. 'No artiste has ever obtained more favorable terms from my principal,' he told her. 'Is it that you demand more money, or more frequent appearances?' 'Oh, no,' said Maggie, and she has such a nice, sweet voice; 'I am, indeed, greatly obliged to Mr. Steindal, and to you, signor, for having troubled to come to Liverpool. But I really must ask you to let arrangements stand in abeyance until my mother and I meet you in London.' 'But what am I to cable to Steindal?' he asked.

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‘Why cable this evening?’ she persisted. ‘Am I such an important little person that the world is waiting breathlessly for my decision?’ That is all I heard while I was paralyzing the clerk.”

“How was Miss Hutchinson dressed?”

“In a navy blue costume trimmed with black braid. She wore a white yachting cap and white gloves. Mrs. Hutchinson was dressed in black, with a sort of black lace mantle and a black bonnet of lace and feathers.”

“And Bocci — what is *he* like?”

“An ordinary, under-sized, pasty-faced Italian, fiercely outlined with black hair, eyebrows, and moustache.”

I went to the bureau again. The inquiry clerk was apprehensive, but I only wanted the London Directory. And therein I hunted up the entry: “Bocci, Giovanni, concert agent,” with a number in a Strand side-street.

“How did you know that Steindal’s London representative was named Bocci?” I asked Karl.

“Oh, I forgot to tell you that Miss Hutchinson held his card in her hand.”

He rattled off “Signor Giovanni Bocci,” and the rest of the copperplate legend! I wonder what the inquiry clerk would have thought had he overheard the whole of Karl’s

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story. Afterwards, when steeled to the marvel of it all, I did not hesitate to prod the dull wits of the heavy tribe which Emerson describes as "only understanding pitch-forks and the cry of 'Fire!'" But that evening I forebore, lest we should be turned out of the hotel.

Indeed, that monstrous British dread of a "scene" induced me to beseech Karl not to go wandering off through space until the conditions were more private. We had four hours to spare, so we dined, strolled to Hyde Park and back, and finally awaited in the hotel vestibule the advent of the two ladies. It was the height of the London season. One of the many fine days which the world's capital manages to smuggle in between layers of fog and sheeted storm was drawing to a close. And how majestic, how radiantly calm, is London at such an hour! The purple haze of evening glorifies the harsh lines of myriad roofs; the long rows of twinkling lights might have been designed by Whistler; beneath the opulent robe of the great city one can hear its tremendous heart beating peacefully.

It was Grier's first adult experience of London, and I was certain that it affected him powerfully. He told me later that he was tempted many times to expand those awesome caverns of his brain, and seek to understand

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with their seemingly immeasurable receptive capacity the giant influences at work amidst that vast aggregation of humanity. But he resisted successfully, feeling somewhat awed, even a little frightened, by the belief that he alone, among the passing thousands, was endowed with almost omniscient knowledge of the actions and utterances of his fellow-men. Not of their thoughts. There was something of that to come — a grand expansion of that sympathetic transmission of ideas vaguely known to men and animals since the Spirit moved over the face of the waters, and the heavens and the earth and all the host of them were designed. But not yet. The most sceptical of scientists could not accuse Karl of flights of imagination, for he recorded naught save positive facts of contemporary occurrence. That, to me, was the most startling feature of his sixth sense. There scarcely exists a man or woman of any real intelligence who has not, at one time or another, communicated the unspoken thought to another at a distance. Truly, this comparatively general attribute of mankind is a far more stupendous and less comprehensible achievement than Karl's telegnomy. But, as Hooper said about the wheel and the use of fire, we soon become surfeited with wonders.

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The hands of the great clock over the fireplace crept slowly past 11.30 P.M., the hour named in the telegram from the shipping company as that at which the *Merlin* passengers would reach Euston. Thence, with the best intentions, otherwise a fast hansom, the Hutchinson ladies could not arrive at the hotel much before midnight.

Nevertheless, at a quarter to twelve, Grier showed some signs of restlessness. I have often thought that these physical indications of the psychic force pent up in certain tiny pyramidal cells situate within the cortex of the gray matter of the brain greatly resembled the throbbings and strainings and extraordinarily minute movements of a boiler getting up steam. Your inch-thick, riveted cylinder may be bolted to iron beams imbedded in granite-like concrete, yet the living power of steam makes its presence felt long ere the engineer bids the impatient giant get to work.

And it was so now with Karl. He could not sit still. The vestibule was full of people waiting to meet the *Merlin* contingent — oh, no, not of English people, but of Americans, anxious to welcome other Americans — yet Karl and I, amidst all the lively throng, enlisted the sustained attention of the inquiry clerk.

Once, after catching his eye, an impulse of

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sheer devilment sent me to greet Mr. Schmidt most warmly. The manager, of course, being an affable man who liked to stand on pleasant terms with his patrons, was quite amenable to that kind of polite attention. We entered into a lively conversation for a minute or two, and I kept darting expressive glances towards the clerk.

I am sure the poor fellow quaked. Quitting Mr. Schmidt, I rejoined Karl, and the inquiry clerk ran across the vestibule. He was most anxious now to be civil.

"I have just heard of a telephone message from Euston," he said to me. "There are ninety passengers for this hotel, and they will be here in a few minutes."

"The first station omnibus is just coming round the corner," said Karl, quietly. "Maggie and her mother are in the next one, not in a hansom."

Now, from where we stood, there was no visible vehicle of the type mentioned. The clerk looked puzzled, as well he might, thinking my companion had commented on his statement. I knew what had happened. During my momentary talk with Schmidt, Karl had taken a peep beyond.

Sure enough, almost at once a London and North Western Railway 'bus deposited the

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first consignment of *Merlin* folk at the hotel entrance. Out of the next conveyance stepped two ladies whom I recognized, from the description supplied by Karl, as Mrs. Hutchinson and her daughter.

I must confess that the sight of them gave me a shock, well prepared though I was for their appearance. Yet it is one thing to expect a certain experience, but quite another to undergo it — as, to wit, being ready for the sensation of a needle-bath and receiving the impact of the icy jets of water on your bare skin.

It was so exceedingly strange to see the mother and daughter, unconscious objects of experiments of epoch-marking importance, quietly appearing at the door of a London hotel under ordinary conditions open to any of the well-dressed, unheeding crowd within or the hurrying multitude without.

They passed through the revolving doors, and looked about them. Karl stepped forward, somewhat shyly, though there was an instant charm in his smiling disingenuousness. You see, he fancied he had to introduce himself, being now a tall man in place of the little boy Mrs. Hutchinson had last seen, and whom Maggie must wholly fail to remember.

So far as mama was concerned, be sure she



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could not distinguish Grier, at first glance, from any other man present.

But Maggie saw him instantly. She became very pale, and her eyes, extremely pretty eyes they were (and are), dilated.

"Oh, mother!" she cried aloud. "There he is!"

So curiously perturbed was she, so timid and childlike in her words and attitude, that Grier's conventional welcome died away in his throat. Yet he held out his hand, and the girl, stepping forward impulsively, caught it in both of hers.

But her eyes filled with tears, and the corners of her mouth quivered, and not another word could she utter. The scene was unexpected, embarrassing, and, of course, dreadfully un-English. And what did it all signify?

## CHAPTER X.

### MAGGIE TELLS WHAT BEFEL HER

I THINK I came to the rescue, but I was so flurried, so completely driven out of myself, that ordered recollection begins only in the middle of the blather which usually serves as conversational counters at such meetings. I made myself known to Mrs. Hutchinson, and she, worthy soul, much perplexed by certain mysterious incidents soon to be made clear (after a fashion), extricated us from a difficult situation by the true motherliness of her surprise and admiration at finding Karl grown to be a bigger man than his father.

She was a Scotswoman, and she delighted in proclaiming the fact. Thus, although a lady of good birth and refined manners, she did not disdain to use the homely phrases of "her ain people" when they expressed her thoughts better than the polished slang which passes current for English in society nowadays.

"Eh, but it's a cure for sair e'en to see you, honey," she cried, when she had assured herself that this six-footer was really the young Grier whom she had heard so much about of late.

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(This cryptic remark will explain itself presently.) "I was sure my letter to your mother would bring you quickly to us if you were not abroad. Did she telegraph to you? I suppose she could not have written in the time. And how kind it is of you to hurry up to London in time to receive us! Did you say you came from Oxford? Well, from what I have heard of young gentlemen at the 'Varsity, they seldom object to an urgent call that brings them to London."

Now that sort of rattling talk is admirably calculated to dissipate metapsychic puzzles into thin air. I was exceedingly grateful to Mrs. Hutchinson. From that moment dated my lasting admiration for her dear, outspoken, open-hearted qualities. Excellent soul! She was trustworthy as oak, and quite as dense to anything beyond the circle of her comprehension.

The two young boobies gazing so pathetically at each other were enabled in the interim to recover their speech and their every-day faculties. Karl's eyes kindled with a friendly interest which threatened developments, and Maggie gazed at him with a smiling, fawn-like wistfulness calculated to drive any heart-whole and well-regulated young man frantic in five minutes by the clock.

It was my first actual, if vicarious, acquaint-

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ance with that pleasant malady known as love at first sight, and, judging by the symptoms of this well-matched pair, the disease is one which, like measles in childhood, is calculated to do the cynic good.

I suppose it is my duty, right here, as Hooper would say, to describe Maggie Hutchinson. I would prefer to give a definition of the differential calculus — one can hunt up these things so readily in any work of reference — but to what encyclopedia can a man turn when he wishes to limn in mere words the elusive charms of a beautiful, well-educated girl, in whom a delightful femininity is blended with the rare artistic temperament — blended, too, with the deftness of a skilled gardener who grafts one lovely and sweet-scented plant on another? If the human soul were ever visible to our mortal senses it must most nearly attain tangible form in fragrant young womanhood. Every artist who seeks inspiration in nature, every poet who writes a stanza to Spring or the Dawn, knows that this is so. And that is why it is not good for mankind that woman should, by training or environment, weaken the God-given maternal instinct which is the golden halo of the Madonna.

Some such thought came to me when I first set eyes on Maggie Hutchinson. She realized an ideal and that is saying much. Not that she

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was so strikingly handsome that men must stare and women sniff merely because she passed, nor that her pose of head and general shapeliness would have enraptured a Greek sculptor. No, I am compelled to state that by the generality of critics Maggie would only be placed among the nondescript "good-looking" section of young ladies, and she might, or might not, be molded like the Capuan Venus for all that her orthodox "tailor-built" (that is the right description, I believe) traveling costume revealed.

But the peculiar circumstances under which I met her, and the rapt spirituality of that look which she flashed at Karl through the gathering tears, added a spice of romance to an otherwise colorless incident. The musician who extracts a thousand tumultuous words out of a single *lied ohne wörte* can best understand the emotional flood of thought which conveys a whole volume of meaning. For an instant I experienced some glimmering perception of Karl's sixth sense. I fancied I actually felt the physical and psychic influence of that "magnetic personality" which we all of us talk about but seldom endeavor to explain.

And then "Miss Hutchinson" told me that she was not tired, "not the least little bit"; that mother and she had "dined on the train"; that it was, indeed, most kind on my part to have

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secured a private sitting-room for the joint and several use of our party and our party's friends. So you see, the first impression fled quickly enough, leaving behind it a glowing streak of recollection like unto the half-remembered track of a shooting star. But, thank Heaven, in Maggie's case it was renewed and developed and perfected until, whether under the spell of her unwavering friendship or thrilled to ecstasy by the inarticulate rapture which, at times, she drew from the infinite storehouse of the violin, in order to please those near and dear to her, I can say candidly that she was the goddess of one small circle, its Athéne and Euterpe rolled into one. Nor was it long before my wife claimed her as her greatest friend. That last saving clause is necessary. This is not *my* love story, but, as the astute reader must have perceived long since, Maggie's and Karl's. Yet I shall be exceedingly surprised — almost as greatly taken aback as I was by the discoveries of the next hour — if the said reader, though an expert dissector of love stories, from the long-drawn-out wooing of Rachel by Jacob, down to the *motif* of the very latest *crime passionnel* in Paris, shall have guessed already the reason why Maggie wept when first she met Karl in the vestibule of the Pall Mall Hotel.

Apparently, we have all been standing there

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an unconscionably long time. Really, we have done nothing of the sort, for I am quite adept in bringing about the right combination of luggage porters, lift attendants, chambermaids and waiters, to secure the best and quickest results in making people at home in a modern big hotel.

"I am so glad to be off the steamer," sighed Mrs. Hutchinson, gratefully, as she sank into a spacious chair in our sitting-room. "Walking along the corridor just now, I caught myself wondering why the other folk using it did not lean over at absurd angles. Even yet the carpet seems to heave gently each half-minute."

That was just the sort of remark calculated to place us at our ease. We chatted freely while the ladies drank a little champagne and nibbled a biscuit; I sampled the hotel whisky, and smoked, together with Karl, at the earnest request of our fair companions.

Karl, by the way, did not know the taste of alcohol, or of any intoxicant. The wisdom of the gods kept him free from that obsession. Goodness only knows what would have happened if the man with a superhuman sense (which it was, according to our present lights) yielded to drink!

Hence, when Mrs. Hutchinson, beginning at the end of the story, told us that she wrote to Mrs. Grier from Queenstown, and a comp-ta-

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tion of hours revealed that the mystery of the telegram was no mystery at all, the way was paved by growing familiarity to permit the conversation to wander off into less well-defined paths. For the good lady made no secret of the *raison d'être* of her letter.

"Maggie had a dream, or a vision — something akin to what my old Highland nurse used to call *taichitaraugh*, a Gaelic mouthful meaning 'shadow-sight.' It was so realistic that it nearly made her ill, and she startled me considerably, when she confided it to me, which was not until twenty-four hours later."

Mrs. Hutchinson, of course, could not guess what a spark on tinder was one of those time-worn words in Karl's ears. I glanced at him to see if the winged barb had struck home, but I was not long in discerning that Maggie's presence occupied his ordinary senses quite sufficiently to keep his telegnomic sense dormant. It might, indeed, stimulate and intensify the others, but no man would use a telephone or an opera glass to hear or see his best girl when she was seated in the same room as himself, would he? Science can do a lot for us, but I will back Dame Nature's idea of a magnet in the shape of a pretty woman against any wizard device of the latter-day alchemist.

Then the mother, at Maggie's request, es-



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sayed to give us the history of an afternoon dream on board the good ship *Merlin*. The day was Sunday, and the weather had been bad. The ship was traversing that choppy belt of the Atlantic which makes the day of rest so particularly unrestful in the majority of vessels sailing from New York or Liverpool on a Wednesday. Indeed, the "White Star Sunday" is an ocean proverb.

"Neither of us felt equal to taking luncheon in the saloon," said she, "so a deck-steward brought us some tempting dishes. The sea subsided rapidly under the change of wind, and we were comfortable enough after our meal. I fell into a slight doze. Maggie says she did not."

"No, mother, I am sure I was awake, because I was running over in my mind *Almaviva's* song, 'Ecco ridente il cielo,' with the guitar accompaniment for the violins," interrupted Maggie.

Then why, my dear young lady, should your cheeks flutter *now* between white and pink, like a Marie Vornhoot rose, beneath the most attractive and healthy brown with which sun and sea have decorated you? And why, with even greater emphasis, should you have been warbling to yourself *then* the love-sick outpourings of the Seville gallant to his Rosina? I thought those old operas were, if not dead, for they are

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immortal, at least buried alive beneath a mound of Gaiety muslin and the striped cotton habiliments of many musical comedy coons.

"Girls get such whimsies in their heads that they often do not know what they are thinking about," replied practical Mrs. Hutchinson. "Yet there can be no doubt, my dear, that something extraordinary did occur."

"When I woke up," she continued, addressing Karl and me, "I found Maggie crying softly to herself. Naturally I was alarmed, and when she did not answer I caught her arm. Then she appeared to recover her wits, but she frightened me even more thoroughly by murmuring something about the utter bliss —"

"Mother!" broke in the girl, evidently nerv-  
ing herself for an ordeal, though her face was  
afame, "let me describe what happened."

"Well, well!" said Mrs. Hutchinson, "tell  
it your own way. I admit I never got the hang  
of it to rights."

It was impossible to watch both Karl's face  
and Maggie's, so I devoted myself to an intent  
study of the subtle emotions which sent their  
undecipherable shadows across the girl's eyes.  
But the woman does not breathe, or is not  
worthy of breath, who cannot be an actress  
when the great crises of existence throb across

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life's stage. Indeed, she controlled her expression and chose her words so well that she soon led my rambling fancy back to the sufficiently bewildering climax of her own adventure.

"Mother has left out what you might call a predisposing influence," she said, smiling, and she spoke to me, not to Karl. "Have you ever heard of the agonic line?"

"Has it anything to do with the 'Personal' column in the *Times*?" was my banal reply.

"No!" It was Karl who answered, and there was a timbre in his voice I had not heard before. It silenced Maggie for the moment. Perhaps it suggested a chord drawn with nerve-thrilling effect from her own beloved violin. Anyhow, he took up the parable.

"An agonic line is an irregular line, running generally north and south, which marks those parts of the earth's surface where the magnetic needle points to the true north. There are three of them, and they are slowly changing their positions," he said.

"Thank you! I could not have explained it so clearly," smiled Maggie, though she persistently averted her eyes. "Well, during the morning, the Chief Officer had been telling me things about the deviation of the compass, the importance of the agonic lines, the mag-

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netic vagaries of some parts of the globe, and the great value to sailors of a recent discovery that at a certain point in front of the foremast the compass ceases to be affected by the polarization which is set up in all iron ships."

Ting! Some tiny nerve-bell jingled in my head. Polarization! Karl and I exchanged looks. We had rapidly made the same calculation. Allowing for difference of sun-time, Miss Margaret's disturbing dream-vision, whatever it disclosed, must have been exactly contemporaneous with Karl's poker-juggling in the Mitre Hotel.

"Now what is it?" demanded Mrs. Hutchinson, whose shrewd Scottish eyes were quick to detect the secret telegraphy between the others, for Maggie flushed most charmingly again, and we three established a circuit of intelligence. "Why do you all gowp like that? You make my flesh creep. The next thing you will be telling me is that there are ghosts in the room!"

## CHAPTER XI

### THE KEY OF THE TREASURE-HOUSE

WELL might Mrs. Hutchinson rail at us with a certain peevishness; here was true midsummer madness, if ever the dog-days' frolic gambeled within the bounds of staid London. And what a wild jostling of ideas, apparently remote as the poles, contributed to the medley; zonic lines, polarization of ships and fire-irons, a curious experiment in an hotel at Oxford, and a girl humming *Il Barbiere di Siviglia* in mid-Atlantic — these were the magic passwords, it would seem, to a new wonder-cave of Ali Baba. I fancied I could hear those fiddles singing the accompaniment to the lovelorn count's impassioned verses. In this latest version of the immortal comedy I was playing Figaro, and Mrs. Hutchinson, if judged by her present impatient mood, provided a fair substitute for Dr. Bartholdo.

Yet, what did it all mean? Karl, to my own knowledge, had not despatched his telegnomic sense on a roving commission that Sunday afternoon at Oxford. He had subjected a poker to what he termed "magnetic induction" merely

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in order to illustrate his unimpaired bodily and mental vigor when I expressed some anxiety about the effect on his health of practising too often a new and perhaps dangerous force. Again, if not at that moment, he had striven subsequently to glean some intelligence of Maggie's doings, only to encounter repeated failure day after day, until she met Signor Bocci in Liverpool a few hours previously. Nevertheless, I was sure that communication between those two was established in that instant, a sympathetic contact, conscious in the maiden's case, unconscious in the youth's. Perhaps, while humming *Almaviva's* strains, the *Rosina* of the *Merlin* applied the words to herself.

And certain stars shot madly from their spheres  
To hear the sea-maid's music.

I turned my eyes for a second from Maggie's face and looked at Karl. He reminded me of a youthful warrior of the age of chivalry, who, guarding his armor in some holy fane during the still watches of the night, found a sweet vision smiling on him instead of the stone saint or stained-glass picture of crude daylight. Evidently he was unaware of having exerted any perturbing influence on Maggie. He was quite genuinely surprised by the coincidence revealed by her words.

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The girl herself seemed to be anxious that we should not answer her mother's question.

"It is difficult to tell you exactly what happened," she exclaimed hurriedly. "I was so confused afterwards that I scarcely could form a coherent idea, and that is why mama complains that I have not said much about it. But I can give you certain incidents which stood out clearly. In the first place, I seemed to lose my senses. I had a curious sensation akin to that felt if one's arm goes to sleep, as we say; only this was general in its effect, and I had not been sitting in an awkward position. Then I heard voices. Everything was dark, though, of course, you understand it was broad daylight on board the ship. Still, I thought I heard two men talking about me, and their remarks were so peculiar that I could not help listening. I should explain that the men were not on board. Indeed, I believe, they were then, and are now, in New York."

"Were they Wilhelm Steindal and Paul Constantine?" said Karl, eagerly.

The question was out before he realized that it had better have remained unspoken. The effect was as instantaneous as any writer of melo-farce could hope for. Mrs. Hutchinson clapped her hands in her excitement, and Maggie became very red indeed.

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"So you, too, knew all about it," she murmured.

"No," said Karl. "I know absolutely nothing of any incident on board the *Merlin* which affects, in any way, the experience you are relating."

"Or afterwards?"

"None, whatever. But I am interrupting you. I am sorry. It was quite involuntary on my part."

Miss Hutchinson appeared to gain confidence after this. She and Karl, and, to a certain extent, I myself, were in the position of ships of different nationalities on the high seas, using the same code-signals, but unable to interpret them without reference to a translation.

"It is very astonishing to my mother and me to hear you mention those names," she said. "We only met Mr. Constantine a week before we left the States. He introduced us to Mr. Steindal. At that time, and, indeed, during the past year, I entertained the hope of earning some degree of fame as a violinist. I have made successful appearances in Berlin, London, New York, Boston, and other places, and Mr. Steindal should have proved to be an exceedingly valuable acquaintance. But Mr. Constantine offended me the evening before we sailed, and the words I heard in my dream bore out his



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previous conduct so completely that I have almost resolved to abandon the idea of a professional career."

"Did you ever hear anything like it?" demanded Mrs. Hutchinson, who was brought back with a bump from psychical manifestations to the hard matter-of-fact details of existence. "Here is this foolish girl thinking of foregoing the results of several years of expensive tuition and some very flattering public receptions, just because she had a queer vision in mid-Atlantic."

"Mother, dear, there was no vision about Mr. Constantine's behavior at Manhattan Beach?"

"No, but that wretched Armenian is not all the world! It is a nice thing if two Anglo-Indians allow a dark person of his type to affect their lives."

Neither Karl nor I moved a muscle when Manhattan Beach was mentioned. But how quaintly these youngsters' careers had become interwoven after so many years of separation! And what an amazing thing it was that Maggie *heard* but did not *see*, when one remembered that music broke the seal of Karl's spiritual hearing! However, I must restrain my speculative thoughts, for Maggie was speaking again.

"I call it a dream," she said earnestly, "but I use that word for want of a better. I feel in

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my heart, in my brain, that I really did hear what Constantine and Steindal said to each other. They planned a great many things, and, if proof were wanted, Steindal's agent met us at Liverpool to-day and made the offer I told my mother of last Sunday."

Mrs. Hutchinson, poised on the very pinnacle of doubt, nodded her head.

"That is true enough," she admitted, smiling in her perplexity, "and it is all through you, Mr. Grier, or shall I call you Karl? That is why I wrote to your mother. We were delayed by fog in the Irish Sea, or we should have been in London before her telegram could have reached you."

Karl only smiled in reply. It was almost impossible for either him or me to comment on the broken narrative which reached us. How bewildered and unnerved the two ladies would be if they realized the minuteness with which we fitted each statement they made into the detailed story we already possessed!

"Yes," said Maggie, speaking very slowly, "no doubt you have been wondering how you can possibly be bound up with my affairs?"

She paused, as if to permit Karl to give some hint that he already possessed the clue to her wanderings in the maze of intangible things. He helped her by saying:

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"We have a story to tell, Miss Hutchinson. I, too, have undergone some extraordinary experiences, but most certainly I did not encounter you in spirit-land while you crossed the Atlantic. I may say that I endeavored to do so, for reasons that shall be made clear, but I failed."

She smiled delightedly. It occurred to me that Karl had said exactly that which she wanted him to say. I pictured Hooper reveling in analytical hair-splitting when we related this conversation to him. Nevertheless, the solution of this latest problem in occultism baffled both him and me for many a day.

"I will pass from Steindal and Constantine," she said, "and come to the next phase of my novel experience. Their voices ceased, and I seemed to recover some sense of my true surroundings. I knew I was at sea in a moving vessel. I could feel the vibration of the propeller, but the only human being of whose presence I was conscious was you, Mr. Grier."

"What an unreceptive soul I must possess!" cried Karl, gallantly.

"You came and took hold of my left hand," she went on. "You said, 'Maggie, don't you remember me? I am Karl Grier.' I think I endeavored to reply, but the words seemed to die away in my throat. You bent over me and told me not to accept the contract Steindal's

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agent would offer me at Liverpool. Then, you gave me a lot of news about yourself and your father and mother. The years seemed to slip back until we were children again in the Kalanullah tea-garden. I don't believe I have ever been so delighted as I was by the knowledge that we had both gone back to our childhood. Have you really no knowledge whatever of all this?"

Hooper himself could not have discharged that final question with more unexpected forensic skill than did this mere girl. It seemed to afford her the supreme test of his assurance. Thenceforth, she gave herself no further trouble on that point.

Her natural vivacity now replaced the somewhat hysterical restraint which she had exercised hitherto. She told us that she had both Karl and heard his voice on three subsequent occasions, and these visitations, though in no way alarming while they lasted, were so mysterious in their semblance of actuality, and dwelt so constantly in her thoughts, that her mother, to whom she had related each incident after its occurrence, determined to seek an interview with Karl, at the earliest opportunity which presented itself on their arrival in England. The mother bore out her daughter's story at all points, though she stoutly held to

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the opinion that the whole affair was the outcome of over-study — Maggie having worked very hard during her visit to the States — combined with the exercise of some telepathic gift which Karl had undoubtedly exercised when a child.

But even Mrs. Hutchinson was compelled to retreat from this logical fortress when Karl asked me to tell his old friends all that had taken place at Oxford. Maggie listened with a feverish intentness that did not escape me. Her shining eyes and parted lips betrayed her. She impressed me as searching for some key which should open the door of complete understanding, but the search was not rewarded — that much I knew when we bade each other "good-night" at a late hour.

Karl and I escorted the ladies to the corridor in which their room was situated, the hotel being so full that we were scattered over three floors. Mrs. Hutchinson, glad to escape from the brain-tangling problems which we could not shirk in discussing recent events, was chatting with Karl about his father and mother, and I seized the opportunity to put a question to pretty Miss Margaret as she walked by my side.

"In your subsequent visions of Karl," I said, "did you ever attempt to speak to him?"

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"No. It was either impossible or I did not experience the desire."

She answered so readily that I was encouraged to go a step further.

"Did you, of your own will, strive to resist these appearances, notwithstanding their seemingly pleasurable nature?"

She looked at me quickly, and the ghost of a smile dimpled her cheeks.

"Yes," she said simply. "I do not mind confessing that they frightened me terribly, afterwards, when I thought about them, but not at the time."

"Were you thinking of Karl when you met Bocci this afternoon?"

"How could we help it, when his predictions were verified the instant we stepped off the steamer's gangway? I must have spoken of him to my mother just before he saw us standing in the Customs shed. Oh, how strange it all is! What will be the outcome?"

A man passed us and glared at me as though he would like to wring my neck. I imagine he thought I was worrying Maggie. She had changed her travelling costume for a dinner-blouse and a light silk skirt. I noticed that her bosom heaved tumultuously and a soft light leaped into her eyes. But I pursued the topic no further, and we parted a few seconds later.

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Next morning, Karl and I were waiting in the vestibule to take the ladies in to breakfast, when the inquiry clerk slipped from behind his desk and approached me with a business-like air.

"Are you Mr. Grier, sir?" he asked.

"No, this is Mr. Grier."

Karl looked at the little man, who seemed half prepared to tremble before another Olympian glance. But Karl's face would reassure a timid child when, as Hooper put it, he was "disconnected."

"I beg your pardon," said the clerk, "but I thought you would like to know that there was a man here last night inquiring for you."

"A man?" said Karl, blankly.

The hotel official, even if he had curt manners with unprotected travellers, was smart enough to discriminate between real mahogany and veneer.

"Yes," he answered off-handedly, "a foreigner, an Italian, I think. He did not want to see you, but he seemed anxious to find out if you were staying here, and if you had met Mrs. and Miss Hutchinson. Of course I told him you were in the hotel, but as for the ladies, I knew nothing whatever about them."

"Did he give you his name?"

"No, sir."

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Karl described Bocci, and the inquiry clerk recognized him instantly.

"That's him," he cried (people always do say "That's him," no one save a parson or a school-master uses the nominative); "I hope I did right in choking him off?"

"You're a wonder," said Karl, laughing, and the clerk quitted us, feeling that he must have greatly mistaken the looks and utterances of this exceedingly nice young gentleman on the previous day.



## CHAPTER XII

### THE SCENE IN THE GARDEN COURT

OF course, it was not to be expected that these morning hours of sunshine (London having embarked, as it turned out, on a giddy whirl of a fortnight's fine weather) would find us in the tension to which we were strung overnight. Such a thing would be unreasonable, almost inhuman. The merry jingle of the hansoms coming through the open windows, the glimpses of omnibus tops freighted with wearers of flower hats and frivolous muslins, the gay horn-blown ta-ran-ta-ra of the coaches crossing Trafalgar Square or climbing the Haymarket — this gladsome medley must banish problems which appealed to either science or credulity. London was astir and enjoying itself, and who were we that we should resist its decorous gaiety?

At that period motor-cars were still sufficiently uncommon in England to lend a piquant novelty to my suggestion that we should avail ourselves of a friend's offer to me and borrow his car for the day. That was soon arranged.

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I sat with the chauffeur on the front seat, Karl and the ladies occupied the tonneau, and when Mrs. Hutchinson and her daughter had recovered from the silent dread of whirring past all other traffic and utilizing apparently impossible openings between heavy vehicles, they began to enjoy the ride immensely.

We ran through Surbiton, Esher, and Guildford, over the Hog's Back to Farnham, where we ate with the normal appetites of four healthy Britons. We came home by way of Aldershot, Virginia Water, Windsor Great Park and Staines, driving gloriously not only through the royal domain but through several Acts of Parliament as well.

Karl, by reason of the nearing end of the Midsummer Term, must return to Oxford that night, so it was interesting to note how much he made of those flying hours of freedom. At least a year a minute fell away from the conventional coating of the decade which had sped since he and the girl were children together. "Mr. Grier," and "Miss Hutchinson" quickly gave place to "Karl" and "Maggie." We were not at Barnes Bridge on the outward journey before Karl had declared his fixed resolution to wheedle a motor-car out of his father the day he quitted the University, and the pair of them were planning where "we" should drive this

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chariot of delight during the wonderful summer of next year!

Maggie, it appeared, was much enamored of cathedrals. Here was a fine inspiration to provide excursions for long summer days! Bless you, they had seen Canterbury, Salisbury and Ely in a sentence, and were doing sums in the following breath to find out if far-away York were achievable. Ah, how potent the engineer who constructs that magic machine which carries the day-dreams of the young! What feats it accomplishes, how smoothly do its noiseless wheels glide over the most perfect of roads! Yet we all possess the treasure, and happy the man or woman who has not lost the joy of living, losing with it the willing slave which carries them whither they list. This wonder-coach is capable of astounding performances. It shall whisk you through many cities and strange lands. What does it matter if the scene be new to your eyes when you are brought to it by the sober stuffiness of a railway plus a return ticket? You have been there twice, that is all, and surely the first visit, in imagination, far surpassed the second, in reality.

Indeed, we enjoyed ourselves so greatly that the crassness of things in general was sure to bring about some unpleasantness. There is a substratum of truth in the old Celtic idea of

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certain people being fey before death. None of us died, I am glad to say, but we should have been wise had we outrageously made off with that motor-car, scurrying far from London ere nightfall, and leaving it to my ingenuity to explain matters to my lending friend.

We reached the hotel at six o'clock, and there was Signor Bocci impatiently awaiting the return of Mrs. Hutchinson and her violin-playing daughter. "Business is business," you know, and really I could see no reason why the girl should not accept the splendid offer made by Steindal's agent. He showed no disinclination to discuss it before Karl and me. Nay more, the little man said he was glad of our presence.

"You are-a men of affairs, yes," he said volubly, "and in-a dis oafar I haf-a displayed to de signorina de career mos' magnificent, is it-a not?"

Certainly his words were justified to outward seeming, though the very hyalescence of Steindal's undertaking should have warned us that things were not so clear as they looked. Here was a girl of little more than eighteen, yet *the* agent, one of the few men in the world of music who could make or break an artiste, was binding himself to give her two "star" performances in London, with full orchestra and distinguished

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vocal soloists, guaranteeing an expenditure of £200 on each concert, one in the autumn and another in the spring of the following year, agreeing to hand her three fourths of the proceeds after (and if) they exceeded the sum named, and, finally, pledging at least thirty public appearances at a fee of twenty guineas each within the ensuing twelve months! Think of it, ye budding geniuses! How the strings would twank and the pens splutter if some moon-frenzy seized impresario or publisher to give *you* a start like that!

Karl, like Mrs. Hutchinson and myself, advised acceptance, though I discovered afterwards that he had a great repugnance to the notion of Maggie appearing on a public platform. That was natural enough, poor fellow. He didn't want to have all the young sparks about town telling each other, and, what was even less endurable, telling Maggie, that she was the most beautiful creature under the sun. No man, short of an actor, can pretend that he likes his inamorata to face the footlights. Stageland has its own domestic idylls, to be sure — and very sweet and wholesome they oft may be — but they are of a different blend to those which find general acceptance.

Yet Maggie, who listened seriously to us all, urged with gentle insistence that no harm would

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be done if we gave Steindal's magnanimity another day's thought, and, when I saw that her mother was quite willing to accede to this request, I backed it up, with the result that Signor Bocci's eyebrows became very fierce, and he murmured something about the impossibility of his principal keeping the offer open indefinitely.

"I do not think my daughter is asking for any unreasonable delay," replied Mrs. Hutchinson with some spirit. "This is practically our first business interview. Your meeting with us on the landing-stage, though exceedingly kind on your part, can hardly be regarded as giving us an opportunity for full discussion. Therefore, to promise a decision to-morrow is speedy enough in all conscience, seeing that when I wrote to Mr. Steindal eight months ago he never even replied to my letter."

This was a facer for Bocci. Nevertheless, he struggled gamely.

"Herr Steindal has a great-a many letters from-a de amateur," he said. "He hear in New-a-York 'ow Mees Ootchinson blay —"

"He did nothing nothing of the kind," cried the elder lady. "That is the extraordinary part of it. He met her, it is true, but he admitted he had not been to any of her concerts. I am beginning to think, signor, that my daughter is

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right and we others are wrong. Will you leave a copy of the contract for our consideration?"

"O-ah, yes," said he instantly, and, being a man of rapid perception, he did not press any more for completion that day.

Certainly I was puzzled by Steindal's tactics. Allowing that he was actuated by the basest motives, that Constantine was paying the bill, and that their precious compact would reveal its intent before many weeks had passed, it was, nevertheless, a singular course they had chosen. What possible harm could result to Maggie Hutchinson if she seized the splendid opening dangled before her eyes by the Jew? All he asked in return was a reasonable monopoly, voidable by his failure to carry out his undertakings in their entirety. From her point of view, it was the most convincing case of "Heads I win, tails you lose" I ever heard of in connection with a profession where contracts are apt to be one-sided.

And the haze did not lessen when Maggie became confidential that evening after dinner. Karl had gone, Mrs. Hutchinson was writing letters, and I had secured two chairs beneath the palms in the Garden Court. Here we could hear the band, watch the celebrities of the hour, and talk without listeners.

"I hope you are not a materialist," said the

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girl, after I had uttered some truism about modern life.

"Perish the thought!" I answered, "though, as one more than double your extreme age, will you permit me to ask what is your definition of a materialist?"

"A gross person — a species of pig man," was her sufficiently amazing reply.

"Are you thinking of Steindal?" I asked involuntarily, though I had resolved to keep clear of the topic for the hour.

"Oh, no. He was not in my mind at all. The music, the lights, the soft tones of the women's dresses, all the harmony to eye and ear of our present surroundings, carried a thought to me. I cannot help knowing that within a very short distance of this pleasant place one can find great misery. Which of these states reveals the truth in life?"

"Both. It is well to hold a balance between them."

"Thank you. Now, one has read how rich and well-born men and women, in other days, have had a vision which so influenced their lives that they forthwith abandoned wealth and rank, and devoted themselves to the painful service of their suffering brethren. Such visions may not be so frequent to-day, but it is a matter of constant occurrence for a similar



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result to be achieved, and achieved in a single hour, whereby the future years of existence are cast irrevocably into a new mold."

"You are speaking solely of spiritual influences?" I asked.

She moved slightly. My question was unexpected. Some of these tender plants of human growth are so delicately constituted that they wince physically if you prod their souls with a verbal arrow.

"I can scarce distinguish between states," she said, "nor have I thought or read deeply enough to claim any clear idea as to what constitutes spirituality. I suppose it sounds strange to hear a girl not yet nineteen talking of such matters at all. But in Berlin one is taught to think earlier than in England, and a musical training is prone to develop fanciful moods."

She was fencing with me. I determined to risk another of those insidious arrow-flights.

"May I take it that your present introspective condition of mind arises from your experiences on board the *Merlin*?" I said.

"Yes."

Her lips set with a snap. It was quite clear that however little Karl's supernormal powers affected him they had exerted a truly remarkable influence on Maggie Hutchinson, an influence, too, so novel and mysterious that she

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seemed almost to fear its analysis. So I endeavored to help her.

"The man would be a fool who denied the enduring effect on the mind of a moment's inspiration," I said. "He might as well argue that the inconceivably rapid passage of an electric current through the body could not contort it permanently or even shrivel it into practical annihilation."

"Ah!" she cried impulsively, "that is how it seems to me. Our poor frail human form cannot choose but obey the soul. At least it must be so if we would be governed by noble instincts and strive ever to reach a higher individual ideal. When the soul yields to the body there you have the downfall, the yielding of the man to the ape."

She leaned forward, with her right elbow on her knee and her well-modeled chin supported by the thin, long, nervous fingers which bespoke the artistic faculty. Spatulate-fingered folk should keep away from strings and easels.

As it pleased her to attach an ethical significance to my words I did not gainsay her. Indeed, something told me to leave her to her thoughts for a little while, and, as she appeared to be listening intently to the music, I sank back into my chair and gave her the choice of continuing the conversation or not, as she saw fit.

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The band, a small but most excellent orchestra, had just rendered a soft and harmonious prelude. I did not recognize the air until a violoncello, exquisitely played, struck into the swelling grandeur of Vulcan's song from *Philemon et Baucis*. Perhaps the girl knew the words as well as the music. I did not. Looking them up afterwards, in Santley's translation, I found them curiously à propos of the strange, all-surmounting force which was in our minds at the moment.

Where loud the brazen hammers sound,  
With lurid light the furnace glowing,  
Down in my kingdom underground,  
Aside vain ceremony throwing,  
I'm sovereign of all around.

Certainly my companion was given a glimpse of some underground kingdom illuminated by lurid light, for I quickly discovered that she was rapt into a state of exaltation which paid no heed to the visible world of fashion and light and music which surrounded us. I spoke to her gently more than once. It was useless. She sat there, with tireless eyelids and glistening eyes, to all outward semblance absorbed in Gounod's majestic chant, but really, as I alone knew, unseeing and unhearing save to sights and sounds not given to my comprehension.

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The suddenness of the thing was positively startling. According to Hooper's experiences, supplemented by my own with Karl, it was probable she would regain ordinary consciousness if touched. Yet I forbore, hovering between anxiety on the girl's behalf and desire not to break in on a trance which might yield some knowledge of actual value. I have often wondered since if any observant eyes among the crowd of loungers were watching us. We must have offered a queer picture, a scene from the charade of life as it is staged in a big London hotel — the wistful-eyed girl, in a graceful pose, gazing blankly into space, as it seemed, and pondering some wordless problem, and the gray-haired, sparely built man watching her with a keenness that must have been very puzzling to any onlooker.

At last the music ceased. There was some applause, and, to my great relief, Maggie regained her wits.

Then a spasm of real passion convulsed her face, as though some fierce gust had swept from a thunder-cloud to distort the smooth mirror of a lake. Reasoned thought was slow in resuming its sway. I was sure she would spring to her feet and scream aloud. Yet it was evident that each instant she was becoming more conscious of her environment and

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gaining strength to repress the agony which wrung her bosom.

With all my world-wandering and its consequent carelessness of mere outward effect, notwithstanding that wayward Celtic temperament which is apt to set Mrs. Grundy at defiance, the upper British crust of conventionality was sufficiently hard on me to demand a rapid glance around the Garden Court *to see if anybody was looking!*

The whole roomful of people might have been gaping at us with twenty scandal-power for all I cared a moment later. Maggie grasped my wrist with a strength which I would not have credited her with, though your skilled violinist must need have good muscles.

"I have heard Constantine raving most terribly," she whispered, in tense accents, close to my ear. "He has arranged to sail from New York on Saturday, and his object in coming to England is to murder Karl!"

## CHAPTER XIII

### CONSTANTINE TAKES A JOURNEY

My first lucid intent was to lead the girl away from that place of gapers. She was overwrought. Perhaps the music, flooding her soul with harmony, had proved a mischievous adjunct to the somewhat exciting topic of our discourse. But, with a little gasp or two, she recovered her self-possession. Some experience of a platform, of facing singly the dim rows of upturned faces, is of utmost value in these emergencies. In my youth, being both shy and nervous, I was speedily cured from those ailments by becoming a newspaper reporter. Many a time, walking towards the platform through a densely packed audience, have I been cheered loudly as the candidate, or lecturer, and then booed vehemently by people annoyed at their own mistake. This treatment, repeated every night for a week, will remove the worst attack of bashfulness.

So Maggie, now, with a well-simulated laugh, drove the terror from her lips if not from her eyes.

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"No," she said; "it has passed. Let us remain here."

She seated herself again. To deceive the curious, in case we were being watched, I lit a cigarette, strolled towards the orchestra, and asked the leader, whom I knew, to play a favorite waltz, one of Waldteufel's. The obliging Hungarian (whose name was O'Rourke!) promptly exhibited an "Extra" card, and I returned to our alcove, "the cynosure of every eye," as we used to say in good journalese.

Maggie's brown eyes had grown larger and darker, her face smaller and white, during my brief absence.

"Better not risk another experiment like that," I suggested, feeling guilty in not insisting that her mother should be warned at once.

"You need have no fear in that regard. I am quite incapable of undergoing such an ordeal again to-night."

Certainly her appearance bore out her words. It occurred to me instantly that she shared with Karl the intuitive knowledge of a temporary exhaustion of the dynamic store which fed this wonderful sixth sense. It was not a continuous endowment, like sight or hearing. Its use drew upon a fund, obviously of limited extent in Maggie's case, which, when depleted, restored itself by slow, natural processes. I

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fitted this discovery into other parts of the puzzle. Like a child arranging one of those interesting toys made of a number of equal cubes bearing a section of a picture on each face, no sooner did I identify any special feature in telegnomy than I marked its assigned place on the chart I had constructed in my mind.

"You seem to have had a trying experience," I said, encouragingly.

"Do I? What did I say, how did I look, when I awoke?"

When a girl asks a question of that sort she is quite normal. I reassured her.

"I have no recollection of being afraid while I was listening to Constantine," she explained.

"It was the half-waking remembrance of what he said that terrified me. I seemed to think that he was about to — to stab Karl with a knife that very instant. Oh, it was dreadful!"

"Tell me what took place. Did you see him?"

"No. I only heard vaguely, as one might hear violent words and the sound of blows through a thin partition. When the 'cello began to play the lament of Vulcan, I suddenly understood that a great many mythological attributes of gods and goddesses must have arisen from a more or less accurate per-



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ception by studious ancients of unknown or, rather, little-used human powers. But why are you smiling? Is that a very old discovery?"

"It becomes newer every day. Forgive me, Miss Hutchinson. I was really congratulating myself on my own perspicacity. I was sure that the words, as well as the music, had affected you."

"But why am I so helpless against these attacks?" she murmured, pathetically. "What is this man, Constantine, to me that his voice should sound in my ears though half the earth intervenes?"

Her eyes became suspiciously limpid, but she lifted her head defiantly.

"Why should I dread him, too?" she cried. "It seems, somehow, that were it not for him I should not have met you and Karl. There can be no doubt that we should not have met so soon. And, with you two to help, it should certainly be an easy matter to circumvent Constantine."

"Is it placing too great a strain on you to ask what you have heard?"

She bent nearer. Almost a child in years, she seemed to be changing into a woman — with all a woman's passion and capacity for endurance — changing even while we sat there amidst the babel of talk in many a foreign

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tongue, with the tender voluptuous plaint of the waltz beating like a heart in rhythmic diapason.

"This is the time I grow frightened of myself," she said, with a wistful little smile. "Just now I was afraid on Karl's behalf. I wish -- and yet I do not wish -- that some one else were favored with these visions. Sometimes they are -- quite -- thrilling. But this one thrilled me in an exceedingly unpleasant way. Have you seen Sarah Bernhardt in that awful play, wherein she hears her lover being tortured to make him confess a secret which she knows? Well, I felt something like that when I came to a knowledge of my whereabouts. What time is it now in New York?"

I glanced at my watch. It was 9.30 P.M.

"A little after four o'clock in the afternoon," I said.

"Then Constantine is in his office. He deals in grain, among other things. One day he explained to me the manner in which a silver currency in Russia and India affects the business done on a gold standard in Canada and the States. Sometimes his agents are instructed to buy above the market rate so as to equalize quotations. He is reputed to be a very clever financier."

"You know him fairly well?" I asked. There

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was never a woman born who could tell a story without parentheses. These side issues are as essential to her recital as gussets to a dress.

"I have met him several times. I must confess he was interesting until he asked me to marry him."

"Oh, he reached that stage?"

"You can put it that way if you like. Such a thought had never crossed my mind previously. He became hateful to me at once. I could not endure his presence. I would as soon think of embracing something cold and clammy, like a snake."

I did not point out that a snake is neither cold nor clammy. A nice young python, for instance, in his multi-colored spring suit, is as grateful and comforting to the touch as a roll of soft plush. But the antipathy of woman for the serpent is an old feud, harking back, I fancy, to the beginning of things. You ought to hear some of the queer tales about snakes current among the natives of India.

Maggie brushed away the memory of the Armenian's love-making with a gesture of disdain.

"Gounod's music set me a-dreaming," she said. "If you indulge in composition there is no better jumping-off place than one of those delicious minor chords wherein the motif flutters

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for a moment before it enters upon a new phase. I had run away ahead of the air when I experienced that pins-and-needles sensation I have spoken about ——”

“Were you cold?” I broke in.

“Slightly. Not as one feels an icy draught of air, but rather the chilliness of sitting motionless in a cold room. Instead of the music I heard a telephone bell. Constantine’s voice answered. There was a pause, and some one, Steindal I expect, told him that Karl Grier was with me in London, and that I was unwilling to sign the contract offered by Bocci. Constantine’s exclamations made me understand so much. There was more ringing, and I distinctly heard Constantine reserving a cabin on a steamer which sails on Saturday. Then he appeared to give way to a fit of passion. He used horrid words, and he vowed to stab Karl through and through. I actually heard the blows of his hand on the table, and he almost shrieked in his rage. Yet I thought there was fear in his voice, too. Oh, please tell me, do you think that this is all madness? I am afraid again, now, not of that man, but of myself!”

Here was a bright and imaginative girl on the verge of hysteria owing to the startling exercise of a sense the existence of which neither she nor any one connected with her had even suspected

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a week earlier. To my thinking, the best way to calm her natural fears was to insist on the scientific accuracy of impressions which might otherwise be regarded as dangerous delusions. So I took her, with the preciseness of a road-surveyor, along the strange path already traversed by Karl, and took care to prove that the human machine, so far as hearing was concerned, only acted more speedily and over greater distances than its iron and copper imitators. Its limits were exactly the same.

"If I were favored as you and Karl are, I should strive to cultivate my knowledge rather than retard its growth by needless alarm," I said. "Luckily, in these days men have learnt to inquire causes instead of falling flat on their faces in superstitious awe when they encounter some new trick of nature. It is only a few months since a patient, lying in a hospital ward containing a crucifix, had a complete facsimile of the sacred image imprinted on the skin of his shoulder during a thunderstorm. More recently, a man bathing in the sea, running for shelter when a storm broke, was struck by lightning. When picked up, a perfect photograph of a neighboring building was found on his breast. Now, these incidents are rightly regarded as exceedingly interesting, but they are neither supernatural nor conducive to insanity.

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Nature acted as a photographer, dispensing with the tripod, the camera, and the black cloth. That is all."

"It is a good deal," said Maggie, a trifle awestricken, but nevertheless pleased, I thought, to know that others than herself were subjected to disturbing phenomena.

Not far distant was sitting a lady of pronounced shapeliness rendered impressive by her exceedingly décolleté dress. I recognized in her the widow of a wealthy provision merchant. I pointed her out to my companion.

"The pity is that such genuine lightning effects are so rare," I said. "Otherwise our adipose friend there, passing one of her late husband's shops some day, might be indelibly branded 'Best Home-cured Bacon' across the broad of her back."

A harmless joke of that kind, even as the humble necessary worm, can serve a useful purpose. Maggie was kind enough to laugh, and we dropped from the clouds forthwith. Mrs. Hutchinson joined us, but her daughter was so quiet — being ordinarily a lively girl, with all a girl's readiness to quiz good-humoredly her neighbors' dresses and looks — that the sharp maternal scrutiny quickly detected her abstracted air.

So there was nothing for it but an adjournment to our sitting-room, where, after prolonged

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conclave, we decided that Maggie should not only decline Steindal's help, but place herself in the hands of — another agent, and risk the Polish Jew's hostility. Again, when Karl's murder was being spoken of — though I attributed little weight to the love-sick Armenian's threats — it was essential that his father should be taken into our counsels. By this time I was as convinced of the reliability of these telegnomic sights and sounds as of the existence of animalculæ invisible to the naked eye but seen through a microscope.

Early next morning I telegraphed to my friend, Grier senior, asking him to come to London on important business. I also cabled to a firm in New York, saying it would oblige me if they ascertained definitely whether or not Mr. Paul Constantine sailed from that port during the following day.

Now, Karl had promised me that, in the event of any further trances taking place, he would write to me without delay, giving details and carefully noting exact times. It came as no surprise when I opened a telegram from him:

"Constantine sails by to-morrow's Cunarder. Letter follows."

I showed it to Maggie.

"You two are beginning to indulge in simul-

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taneous magnetization," I said. "You may depend upon it, Karl had a look round New York about half-past nine last night, Greenwich time. He brought you with him. If you were not so timid you would soon be able to see as well as hear."

"You forget that I can see *him*," she said, and her voice was so low that I glanced at her and was surprised to find her cheeks suffused with color.

"Did you see him last night?" I demanded.

"No, but I was conscious of his presence."

"Conscious! How?"

"I cannot tell," she answered simply. "I only know that it is so."

"Yet you have astonished me frequently by your direct way of expressing your meaning. There are so many forms of consciousness."

"Some of them are new to me. When Karl magnetized your hands did you know what was happening?"

"I felt a numbing cold from the wrists to the finger-tips."

"That is akin to my sensation, too, but it is general, as I have told you already."

I laughed. Being an old fogey, I had omitted a most important factor in the affairs of these young people. If, as I suspected, Maggie was as badly smitten as Karl with that curable



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disease of the heart called love, it was fairly certain that these two were thinking of each other at every spare moment of the day, not to mention their dreams.

Karl's letter, explicit enough in all details, bore out Maggie's statement. Constantine was behaving like an incipient homicidal maniac. He had purchased a deadly looking dagger, of Sicilian manufacture; hence, it was a reasonable assumption that the blade would be efficient if properly used.

"I purpose meeting the scoundrel and kicking him into his senses," wrote Karl, coolly; but his father and I, assured that Constantine had, indeed, quitted the States, considered the matter far too serious to be left to such a haphazard method of treatment. Grier *père*, what between anxiety on his son's account and annoyance that the dawn of a splendid career should be clouded by this rejuvenescence of a faculty which he fondly believed was long since dead as a door-nail, was not the best of counselors at this crisis.

In view of the tragedy which did actually take place, I have often wondered, in those quiet hours when a man reviews the past without prejudice, whether any better course was open to us than that which we adopted.

Our difficulties were many and embarrassing. It was not Constantine but we who were liable

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to be treated as lunatics if we told our story to any self-respecting policeman. Imagination boggles at the picture of the "intelligent officer" when asked to arrest a man on telegnomic information. As it is not my design to treat jocosely a most lamentable chapter of Karl's biography, I must omit any analysis of the official mind on that topic.

After much debate, we decided to deal with the situation ourselves, and collectively. I must insist that this was the elder Grier's plan. True, I fell in with it, but not without grave foreboding. Your prosperous, hard-headed man of affairs does not lay sufficient stress on the overwhelming power of the primary instincts, and Grier would have scoffed at any theory that in the triangular conflict of positive and negative forces set up by Karl, Maggie, and the Armenian, we had gone back aeons in the life-history of humanity.

However, I was a party to the scheme, so I must share its responsibility. Karl's tutor set him free for the requisite twenty-four hours, and we three went to Liverpool to meet the mail steamer. We intended to persuade Constantine to remain in that city a few hours, talk over the whole matter fully and squarely, and point out to him the utter folly of his pursuit of Maggie and his design on Karl's life.

It was so very straightforward and easy

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when viewed in the "common-sense aspect." As if muddle-headed saws and statutes would avail against a law of creation! Will you believe it, we two grayheads completely omitted Karl's sixth sense from our calculations! There were we, full of wise aphorisms and sapient advice, ready to deal with Constantine on the basis of a transaction in wheat, awaiting on the landing-stage the coming of the big steamer, when Karl, whom neither of us had addressed for a minute or two, suddenly attracted our attention by a choking noise.

He would have fallen had not his father caught him. His face, usually so cheerfully healthy, wore a distressing pallor, his lips were tremulous, his eyes distended.

I knew, too late, what had happened.

"Good heavens, Grier!" I whispered, "Karl has seen Constantine on board the ship!"

"Yes," murmured Karl, hoarsely, gazing wildly from one to the other of us. "I saw him, and he saw me. He has just committed suicide! He jumped overboard! His body was caught by the screw! Oh, may the Lord pardon me! I believe I impelled him to it!"

## CHAPTER XIV

### CONSTANTINE ENCOUNTERS THE SHARK

SOME brass-buttoned official of the railway company or harbor authority was near enough to pay heed to our strange behavior. He also caught sufficient of Karl's excited words to attach some significance to them, though, of course, they must have sounded in his ears like the broken gabble of dementia. Quite civilly (seeing that we bore the tip-giving appearance) the man approached.

"Is the young gentleman ill?" he asked. "Can I *git* him anythink?"

Karl turned and looked at him. The man's jaw fell and he stepped back a pace. Away out in mid stream of the Mersey I saw the Cunarder stop, a tug in attendance reversed engines and dropped astern. There was no need to tell me that Karl was not mistaken. Constantine's soul was even then passing, somewhere out there amidst the swirling waters. Within twenty minutes, at the utmost, the tragedy would be reported ashore, and there was no knowing what this suspicious police-

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man might say, if, as I suspected, he were able to piece together Karl's disjointed sentences.

The situation demanded coolness — it was no time for vain regrets. I advised Grier to take Karl to our hotel without an instant's delay, and there await my arrival.

"Make him talk to you," I insisted. "Keep him occupied incessantly until I join you."

The older man was dazed, frightened a little, I think, by the glimpse he had caught of a strange light in Karl's eyes, but still incredulous, as we mortals are apt to be when faced with truth. Indeed we only yield prompt and unquestioning belief to glib imposture, and the more outrageous it is the more perfervid dupes do we become.

"For Karl's sake and your own, Grier," I whispered, emphatically, "do not hesitate. You can trust me. I will bring all news. Constantine is surely dead, but, if we are wrong and he still lives, I will bring him to you."

My earnestness had its effect. Grier hurried his son away from the landing-stage. Then I tackled the policeman.

"You saw that my young friend had a sudden and severe attack of neurosthenia?" I said.

The bewilderment left the man's face.

"Is that it, sir?" he said. "By gum! it must be an awful thing. He fairly scared me."

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"He scares every one connected with him. It is not really serious, but it is induced by excitement, and he often receives strangely accurate impressions of events that are taking place at a distance. Just now he imagined that a friend of his had fallen overboard from the liner."

"So I heard him say, sir, and, s'elp me, if somethink hasn't gone wrong!"

Nothing could be clearer now. The huge vessel was motionless, her rails were black with passengers gazing aft and the tug had lowered a boat.

"Well," I said, "whatever it is there is little to be gained by adding to the publicity of it, and you know what fiends these newspaper men are when they get hold of a sensational paragraph."

My hand went to my pocket, a fine instance of hypnotic suggestion.

"I never did see anythink like his eyes, sir," said the man, dubiously. I produced a sovereign.

"Poor fellow!" I murmured in commiseration. "He is a great trial to us. We really should not have brought him here. But you can quite see that we do not want any comment on his — er — peculiar —"

"Oh, of course, sir. We chaps often have

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to keep eyes and ears open and mouths shut, sir."

We moved apart. The Cunarder gained her berth after a quarter of an hour's delay. A stream of passengers flowed down the broad gangway. Running through the boisterous greetings of friends and the turmoil of people anxious to secure their luggage, I heard a crescendo of broken exclamations which carried their special import to me alone:

"Oh, my dear, it was perfectly shocking. It has quite spoiled my trip."

"Must have been cracked!"

"A young man like him! Just fancy it!"

"Guess he was tired of bein' rich. Never had that complaint myself."

There was no need to ask of whom they spoke. It was an awkward moment to seek information from the ship's officers. The triumph of organization which marks the Atlantic mail service would speedily empty the crowded decks, and already two cataracts of boxes and steamer trunks were hurtling over the side into the Customs shed. My opportunity would soon arrive. So, stifling my horrible imaginings as best I might, I mixed with the throng, and thus, by chance, encountered one who had been an eye-witness of Constantine's last madness.

My most recent acquaintance, the man in

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uniform, while helping a passenger with his portmanteau, asked if there had been an accident before the vessel warped alongside the landing-stage. The answer he received led him to hail me in passing.

"Here's a gentleman who can tell you all about it, sir," he said, thinking, no doubt, he ought to consolidate the gift of that sovereign.

"Are you a friend of Mr. Constantine's?" demanded the stranger, a pleasant-looking, square-faced man, whom I found afterwards to be the London partner of an important Anglo-American house of discount brokers.

"No. I only happened to accompany some people who came here to meet him."

"Are they waiting yet?"

"No. They heard of the affair and have gone. Of course it upset them a good deal."

"By Jove, it was ghastly. I knew Constantine — have done business with him for years, in fact. He was always a quiet, sober sort of fellow. I, for one, never suspected he was given to drink."

"Was he?" I asked.

"Well, I am not exactly an expert where delirium tremens is concerned, but surely this could be nothing else?"

"All I have been told is that he threw himself overboard."



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"That was the finish, natural enough when one comes to review things again. He kept very much to himself on board, rather avoided me and others, we thought; but we put that down to illness. He had a deck cabin, and seldom appeared unless the sea was rough. Then he would find a sheltered place and gaze at the waves for hours. Yet, whenever I spoke to him, he was quite civil, a trifle reserved, perhaps, but as sane as I am myself. Like everybody else, he seemed to brighten up when we entered the Mersey. He was standing on the promenade deck, near the saloon hatch, within a yard of me, and, like the rest of us, looking at the shipping in the docks. Suddenly he let out a screech like a wild Indian. He made me jump, I can assure you. He was a swarthy-skinned chap, but his color was green when I turned towards him. He seemed to be gazing at something in the water, and so far as I could understand his words, gurgled deep in his throat, he thought he saw a shark."

"A shark!"

"Yes. It was all utter rot, of course. I was so taken aback that I could only stare at him. Several ladies screamed, they were so frightened; but Constantine put his hand inside the left breast of his waistcoat, whipped out a dagger, and began to stab savagely at the air. I was

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certain he had gone mad, until, a few minutes later, a steward told me he had practically lived on champagne all the way from New York. Like other men in the neighborhood, I was thinking seriously of grappling with him from behind, when he gave another yell and bounded across the top of the companionway to the star-board side. That is the Birkenhead side of the ship, you know, and the deck there was almost deserted. He knocked three people down who were in his way, and began to climb the rail. I made after him, but just missed him, though my hand touched his heel. He struck the water, vanished, and just then the ship swung round towards the landing-stage."

"So the screw caught him when he rose," I blurted out involuntarily.

"Ah! you heard of that? I never saw him again, but his bedroom steward said that when the tug's dingey picked him up he was still living, though a propeller blade had taken a leg clean off."

"Do you mean to say —"

"Oh, he died while they were lifting him out of the water. Strange thing he should have had that notion about the shark and then lose a leg, wasn't it?"

I managed to find words to thank my informant, whose name and address I obtained

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though I was so agitated that he expressed his regret if he had harrowed my feelings with his recital. Luckily, he was discovered by a Liverpool merchant whom he knew, and we parted with a promise to meet in London.

Though I have seen many distressing sights during the course of a varied life, I have never felt so near sickness, so physically overcome, as amidst that cheery, bustling, chatting crowd. I drifted away aimlessly, filled with an absurd terror, which caused me almost to cringe when I passed a policeman. Ridiculous as the notion was, I fancied that Karl, his father, Maggie, and myself were *participes criminis*, sharers in the awful secret which led to that poor mangled body being carried to a mortuary. It is all very well now to smile at the shaken nerves which induced this shrinking, self-condemnatory frame of mind. It was very real and terrible then, nor was it lessened by the knowledge that my friends would probably suffer from the same delusion in their turn.

Slinking, conscience-stricken, through the barrier, I saw a refreshment buffet. To this day I can recall the surprise of the barmaid when I grabbed a bottle of French brandy and poured out what she said was two-shillings' worth of best cognac, "warranted pure," which I drank neat.

"Well, I never!" she gasped.

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"Nor I, hardly ever," I managed to say, for the ardent spirit reinvigorated me. And let me interpolate here, as a breathing-space in a thrilling moment, that it is a fine thing never to drink brandy when in good health; thus it becomes an invaluable tonic in physical suffering or mental depression.

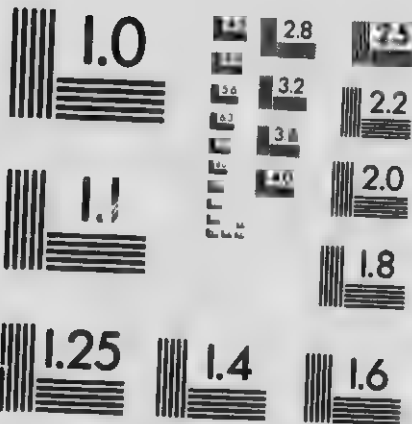
Well, I hastened to the hotel, refusing a cab, in the belief that the brandy and the exercise would restore the disturbed poise of my faculties. The walk was a trifle longer than I had counted on, so a full hour elapsed between our parting and our meeting. As I expected, Karl was in a very distressed state, and I was called on to deride in him the foolish conceit which had shaken my very soul at the docks. His father's British phlegm was superb on this trying occasion. To him, Constantine was an admitted scoundrel, and a "nigger" at that.

"Never heard such nonsense in my life!" he declared, in the true "Confound it, sir! what d'ye mean?" manner of John Bull, which a Scotsman quickly makes his own when he comes South. "Of course, I am sorry this Armenian firebrand has taken his own life, but it is quite evident that if he did not face an Eternal Judge he would soon be called on to face an earthly one. You talk about personal responsibility for the death of a madman, a loony who has visions and carries a



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long knife concealed on his person! What next, I wonder? My firm belief is that his untimely decease was a dispensation of Providence!"

Having thus called in the big battalion of the British nation, Mr. Grier preened his chest and was for an immediate return to Oxford, where he would remain with his son until the end of term. You cannot argue with a man who describes such a tragedy as Constantine's as an "untimely decease." The phrase lent to our discussion a grim humor, of which my excellent friend was sublimely unconscious.

And, indeed, looking back in calmness to the tumultuous thoughts of that day, I have ever been thankful that his stolid good sense came to our aid. It must not be forgotten that Grier the elder had small experience of Karl's sixth sense. He remembered the events of early years in India, of course, and had heard of Constantine's rescue at the time of its occurrence, while Mrs. Grier's faithful reports told him that his son remained a prodigy. But was there ever an only son who, if ordinarily intelligent, had not some wonderful attribute known only to his parents? "So many single chicks so many prodigies," the proverb might run. And since the tea-planter quitted India he had been exceedingly prosperous in his financial undertakings, mostly connected with the ever-expanding

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tea trade. He was one of the wise men who resisted the temptation to grow the coarse leaf on his plantations, and now he was reaping the reward, as the "large output" school was discredited, whereas Grier's "fine growth" companies were amassing wealth.

Hence, a mind which was wont to be receptive of esoteric ideas during the long Calcutta nights of past years was now more occupied with the affairs of commerce. He was piling up money, and for what? To enable Karl to enter Parliament, marry well, and earn a peerage. That is one form of heredity, when the father's ambitions center wholly in the son. So Grier senior valued foresight, but, as our cousins say, he had no use for "far sight" as practised by Karl. I suspected that he was profoundly annoyed with me for seeming to encourage the exercise of the telegnomic sense (wherein he was misled by the accident of our coming together again owing to its revelations), and it was a proud moment for me when, not long ago, he confessed his error and recanted his opinions.

However, he was a rock to which we clung for salvation during that storm-tossed afternoon in a Liverpool hotel, for we had barely resolved to take the next train to Oxford and London respectively, than there came a telegram addressed to Karl.



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He opened and read the message with a strange listlessness.

"I was expecting something of the kind," he said, handing the slip of pink paper to his father. "I knew it had ended; I knew it on the landing-stage."

The telegram was from Maggie. It ran:

"Sympathize with you in dreadful event. We leave England to-night. Farewell."

"What does it mean?" I asked incredulously. "Why is she going so suddenly? How does she know anything about Constantine? And what has ended?"

Karl turned aside and pretended to look out of the window. The soft-hearted fellow was ashamed to let us see the tears in his eyes.

I examined the telegram more closely. It had been a long time on the way, nearly an hour. It was despatched before any one on the landing-stage (save three people, none of whom could communicate with her) had the least inkling of the Armenian's suicide.

Had Maggie, too, been a spellbound witness of that elfin spring into the river? Had she seen all? And what was the significance of Karl's weary cry: "I knew it had ended?"

I glanced at him again, but his head was bowed, his face hidden by his hands. Silence was best, just then.

## CHAPTER XV

### THE OTHER WOMAN

WHERE grown men are concerned — men of the Anglo-Saxon breed, that is — emotion cannot be other than spasmodic. I have seen a gentlemanly convict conduct himself with great dignity during the march to the scaffold. It was not, poor devil, that he did not fear death, nor that it was a grateful thing to be dropped ignominiously out of life on a June morning, but rather that he, after breaking many of his country's laws, obeyed the one inflexible social edict which regulates good and bad "form." Therefore, with a wry grimace when he emerged from the whitewashed corridor, and saw that his earthly pilgrimage would end near the further wall of a small courtyard, he carried himself with a composure far beyond that manifested by any other member of the melancholy procession. A criminal in one instinct, he was a man in all the rest. I suppose the real wrench had come and gone weeks before.

Now, I had no knowledge of the torture Karl had undergone until he turned towards

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me again, and I found a gravity in his face which had not been there before. Since that morning two little lines had developed between his eyebrows at the junction of nose and forehead. That is nature's way of minting her crude gold — just a touch of the finger of experience, no matter if the agony be of soul or body, and there is no machine can stamp its token more indelibly.

"Maggie's message is her last word to me," he said. "She means that she will endeavor never to see or hear from me again."

Even his father was troubled by the marked restraint in his voice, but I felt that the mere effort of discussion would be helpful.

"That is a blank impossibility," I cried. "You two will find each other whether you like it or not. You did so before and you will do it again. The settlement is not in your hands, unless I err greatly."

"You do not understand," said Karl. "Perhaps *you* may meet her sometime. Please tell her what I have said. Let it rest at that."

"If you mean that all this tomfoolery is going to stop here and now I am heartily glad of it," broke in his father. "Had I been aware of what was going on it would have been ended long since. Good gracious! what was this unfortunate fellow, Constantine, to us that we

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should bother our heads about him? I assure you, Karl, that the only thing which troubles me is the fear lest this latter-day witchcraft of yours may not be interfering with your work if not actually undermining your health."

I regret to say that my respected friend reminded me just then of Balaam smiting the ass when she refused to follow the path he had chosen. But I did not urge the parable aloud. How could a modern man of business agree to the contention that his son had set in motion an irresistible natural force? Most certainly he "stood in a narrow place, and there was no way to turn either to the right hand or to the left."

But Karl's obvious wishes should be respected. I pretended to agree with his father. I used the customary platitudes anent his career and the necessity there was to endeavor in future to repress any manifestation of his sixth sense. And while I was talking, I saw the ghost of a sad smile flickering on Karl's lips, because he knew that I knew better. I laughed myself (ostensibly at some trivial remark by the elder Grier that there would be some sense in telegnomy if Karl could summon a waiter quickly by its exercise) when I thought of Hooper's scorn of the notion that a fellow shouldn't see through a brick wall if he had the power. I was sure that he would pounce

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on the suggestion as another instance of British disinclination to adopt new ideas!

We parted soon, and I regard it as not the least amazing feature of my really close association with Karl that I did not see him again for five years.

That is the sort of queer prank the tides of existence will play occasionally with the flotsam and jetsam of humanity. The great highways of rail and ocean may be bringing the whole family of the globe into closer communion, but they have, too, the strange result of separating units in a way not dreamed of by our forefathers. Thus, when my wife and I were in the Western States of America, Karl was in Germany, making the acquaintance of his mother's relatives, and learning again the iron-clamped syllables which bind German thought in words which are whole phrases.

We came back to Europe, to watch t' e upspringing of our own youngster, and we transferred bag and baggage to Heidelberg at the time chosen by Mr. and Mrs. Grier to establish themselves in a house in Curzon Street, Mayfair.

Of course we kept in touch by correspondence. Mrs. Grier and my wife sent each other family news, Grier gave me occasional "tips" which, by operation of that wonderful

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machine, the Stock Exchange, took money from some stranger's pocket and put in into mine, merely because one of us bought and the other sold stock, which neither of us possessed, in a railway, or a mine, or an industrial company, in which we had not the slightest commercial interest.

Karl, beyond semi-humorous hints, said little about telegnomy. He kept me duly advised of his progress in the University. During the month of May of the year following Constantine's death he obtained that much-sought document of little future value which set forth the degree of: "GRIER, KARL, é Coll. Æn. Fac., die 30° Mensis Maii, Anni — Examinatus, prout Statuta requirunt," and the rest of it. Then, with other youthful sages, he wrote his name in a leather-covered book, subscribed himself "Filius Generosis," and was finally admitted "ad gradum Baccalaurei in Artibus."

He did not secure honors, and in this respect justified his father's fear that the adjectival sixth sense was anything but a help to him. The truth was that Karl, to whom scholastic work was too easy, was prone to dream away many an hour which might have been applied more profitably from the "Ita testamur" point of view of the examiners.

He never alluded to Maggie in his letters,

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and his omission in this respect reminds me that I also have been slow in recording the one really interesting bit of news I learnt from Hooper when I met him in New York.

After Constantine's death, who do you think hunted up the whereabouts of the girl and her mother and brought back into their lives, with redoubled poignancy, the unhappy memory of a tragedy? None other than Constantine's solicitors! The unfortunate Armenian made a holograph will in New York (which, though self-written, was quite to the point and properly witnessed), leaving to Margaret Vane Hutchinson, daughter of the late William Hutchinson, tea-planter, Darjeeling, Bengal (an archaic description of Darjeeling), and at that present date residing with her mother, Mrs. Alice Holroyd Hutchinson, in the Pall Mall Hotel, London, England, "all the real and personal estate" of which he died possessed. To account for this astounding bequest he stated that the said "Margaret Vane Hutchinson is the woman I intend to marry," a written testimony of his views which is all the more to his credit seeing that Steindal's Mephistophelian method of securing the girl's submission contemplated no such honorable course. Indeed, I have thought better of the Armenian ever since I heard of that clause in the will.

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Naturally, Constantine's Armenian and Levantine relatives were very wroth. They would have liked to torture with hot irons the straightforward American secretary who found the will among his employer's papers, and took good care that it reached the hands of the trustees and solicitors to the estate. They wanted to contest it on various grounds, none creditable, it may be safely inferred, and had the matter been left to the girl herself she would have executed any legal transfer of the property to the disappointed crew without consideration.

Her mother, however, thought they had done quite enough already for Constantine's sake. Maggie, after a terrible scene in London on the day we were in Liverpool, obtained Mrs. Hutchinson's consent to the abrupt closing of a professional career and a departure forthwith to the Italian Lakes, where they could live in economical retirement, and Maggie might devote herself to painting.

The mother yielded because she feared for her daughter's reason. In sober earnest, the girl was nearly distraught, and was not in her right mind until they quitted England. But although adamant in her resolve to withdraw from the world (had Maggie been a Roman Catholic nothing could have kept her from entering some religious community), she rapidly



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recovered her normal good health and abounding good spirits. Hence, Mrs. Hutchinson exercised her native shrewdness when the solicitors ran her to earth, and it was proposed that her daughter should forego the fortune thrust upon her.

She referred the lawyers to the firm who looked after her own moderate investments; there was much legal squabbling, and, you may be sure, some nice grapes off the bunch fell into the legal maw. Ultimately, the other Constantines purchased the business interests of their kinsman at about half their value — it would never do for Christian accountants to be taking annual stock of their dealings — and Maggie received, from this source and from the dead man's personal investments, nearly three quarters of a million sterling!

"Yes, sir," said Hooper, in whom the keen air of New York had brought out the latent financial instinct, "over three and a half million dollars" — how he rapped out those wonderful syllables in clear staccato accents — "that was what Maggie scooped out of the pot when Karl called Paul and she saw both hands."

"Where are Maggie and the millions now?" I asked admiringly.

"I've bin thinkin'. There ain't much in this codification-of-laws notion anyhow. Guess I'll

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take a vacation, an' work up some sort of telegnomy that will materialize," said he.

But he was not serious. He was already earning a reputation as a smart young lawyer, having passed with distinction all the qualifying examinations in the States, and, indeed, he told me later that he was "chewing on," the offer of a post as legal adviser to the Paris Embassy. So far as he knew, the Hutchinson ladies never left Italy. In the winter, Maggie might be seen copying pictures in the galleries of Florence or studying architectural effects in Rome or Venice — her pictures having attained some fame for their vivid handling of sunlight on the brilliant Italian exteriors. In the summer, she and her mother dwelt in a small castle, the Castello Rondo, to be precise, on a wooded hill overlooking Lake Como. These details Hooper had gathered from people who had friends among the American colony at Florence. Maggie was very pretty, very reserved, devoted to her art and to old silver. That was all he knew about her.

I was in Heidelberg when the curtain rose again on the Grier drama. "Adventures come to the adventurous," says the old saw, and the homeless literary free-lance of to-day has his surfeit of excitement, full measure, just as spicy a draught as ever tickled the palate of any

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wanderer through the Dark Ages. I have already commented on the peculiar way in which the tragedy of life obtains its stage effects, for all the world like any writer of those thrilling "spectacular" plays which in England used to be labelled "transpontine." Here is a typical first act. Scene, a peaceful village; the good young man and the rustic beauty are discovered living in Sunday-school innocence with their bucolic parents. Enter two well-dressed villains, of both sexes, and, after quarter of an hour's excitement, the stalwart hero is lugged off, R., to penal servitude for a crime he never committed, and the heroine falls fainting, L., while the cloth descends to slow music, *tremolo con molto espressione*. Something of the kind happened to me. We, that is Mr., Mrs., Master and friends, had been enjoying a boating excursion on the Neckar, with a grand drive through the Schonau woods, a fine meal in an ancient inn, and a moonlight-cum-mandolin journey homewards.

And there, at our comfortable lodgings, I found a telegram awaiting me:

"Karl is causing us some trouble. Can you come and help? — GRIER."

My wife had heard from Mrs. Grier only a month ago. There was no mention of any

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shortcoming on Karl's part in that missive. Indeed, it was chiefly intended to warn us of an impending visit by a tremendous person, the Baroness von Liebenzell-Zavelstein, one of Karl's maternal great-aunts, the stoutest and most aristocratic lady in the Grand Duchy.

Yet Grier was not a man to telegraph for me without good cause. Never did I regret more keenly the inspissated brains which refused to exhibit the least sign of a sixth sense. How useful it would have been now if I could "send out" Hertzian waves and "call up" Karl on our private installation of wireless telephony! But my dense membranes forbade any such short cut towards knowledge, even if the remainder of the machinery were not rusty with disuse, so, while I was packing, I could only indulge in theorizing.

"The sure thing is that Maggie has vacated the Castello Rondo," said I to my better half. "A beautiful and rich young Englishwoman could never immure herself for life in the Italian hinterland."

"It is the height of the season in town. Karl and she have met in society," was the practical response.

"Um! A coincidence."

"What is the coincidence?"

"It is just five years ago to-day since I went

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to London with Karl. It was then the 'height of the season' as you call it."

"That is what everybody else calls it."

"My dear, the phrase is hackneyed. The wife of a writer should seek a polished synonym. Let me help you to a selection: the fashionable zenith, the apotheosis of Park Lane, even the saturnalia of society —"

"Are you going without your boots?"

Well, I reached Charing Cross next evening, and there, on the platform, stood Grier *père* to meet me. He was alone.

"I have taken rooms at an hotel," he said after our first hearty greeting. "I don't want you at the house, because I fancy you will do more good by getting Karl to yourself of an evening, so I must ask you to be my guest at the Pall Mall Hotel."

"That is odd," I said.

"You will understand better when we have had a talk."

I did not explain that my ejaculation referred to the choice of the hotel and not to his action in sending me there. We entered his carriage and quitted the station.

"I hope there is nothing seriously wrong with Karl?" I began.

"No, no. Not at all. But you are the only man who really knows, or pretends to know,

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anything about this inf—— this wretched sixth sense of his, and it has come on again, worse than ever, since his engagement."

"Hertzblut! Is he going to marry Maggie after all?"

"Maggie! Maggie! Why do you mention her? He is engaged to the Honorable Nora Cazenove, daughter of Lord Sandilands."

I leaned back in the carriage. I could almost have chuckled.

"Ah," I murmured softly to myself. "The other woman has arrived! Now there will be ructions!"

## CHAPTER XVI

### WOMEN CALLED HIM "THE MAGNET"

NEVERTHELESS, there must be some more convincing explanation of the telegram which brought me from Heidelberg than Karl's matrimonial intentions.

"Doesn't the engagement meet with your approval?" I asked.

"Most decidedly. It is a suitable match in every way. Karl has been nursing a constituency for a year or more. He is sure to win the seat at the next election. Lord Sandilands has such interest that his son-in-law will be quite a personage in the parliamentary world if he has any brains at all, and no one can deny Karl's gifts in that direction."

"It would be difficult indeed. I think I have heard that Lord Sandilands himself is — er—"

"A noodle, to put it mildly. But his daughter is a fine woman, an amazingly fine woman when one sees her father. They tell me his wife was an actress, and a great beauty; so perhaps the only wise thing his lordship ever did was to marry her. Nora is an only child. Both title

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and estates will pass to her son if she has one. So you see —"

"I can see everything except the *raison d'être* of my presence in London to-night."

"For an expert in telegnomancy — if that is what you call the thing — you are surprisingly slow to grasp my meaning. Never since we said good-by to you in Lime Street Station has this spook business troubled Karl in the least. He has done some remarkable things, it is true. I have seen him make people jump nearly out of their skins, but only by way of a joke. The women call him 'The Magnet,' you know. Oh, you hadn't heard that? There is nothing in it but sheer fun. He wouldn't look at a girl until I spoke to him seriously a couple of months ago, and then he told me that he was quite ready to marry the first girl I chose for him. So Sandilands and I fixed matters."

"Did you?"

There must have been a note of irony in my voice. Grier bounced round in the carriage, and I may mention, as a matter of personal observation, that the accumulation of riches tends to shorten a man's temper.

"Yes, we did," he snapped, "and, what is more, we fixed matters uncommonly well. Karl cared as much for Nora as for any other nice young woman of his acquaintance, while she



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was infatuated about him. Just the right combination, to my thinking, in a marriage which is intended to start a man on a great career."

"Ach Himmel!" I murmured. "Where is the planter of my youth? Does Mrs. Grier subscribe to that sentiment?"

Even as I spoke, I felt sorry for the bantering tone I was adopting. It may be that I was tired after my journey, or that my old friend's sudden announcement of his son's engagement had driven all other considerations from my mind, but assuredly I would not have wrung a father's heart if I had guessed how he was suffering.

He caught my arm, and the glare of light from the hotel entrance, at which the carriage was then pulling up, showed me a face aggarded and convulsed with pain.

"Don't!" he almost sobbed. "I can't stand it. My God, have you forgotten how Constantine died?"

"My dear fellow —" I began, but a Swiss hall porter in the undress uniform of a British field-marshal was at the open door.

Though wretchedly ashamed of myself, what could I say? I was tongue-tied with surprise. Had things reached such a pitch that Grier was trembling for his son's sanity? Nothing short of some terrible crisis could have wrung that cry of despair from a man of the money-making

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temperament. To be sure, we are apt to err greatly when we describe a millionaire as "cal-  
lous," "steel-nerved," and other foolish epithets  
of that ilk. Constantine was a millionaire, and  
he was as sensitive as a plate full of iron filings  
exposed to the influence of static electricity.  
And then, look at A. and B., men whom you  
hear of daily; their hyper-nervousness is a matter  
of common knowledge.

Of course I put things right with Grier when  
we were alone once more. By that time, the  
momentary rift in the cloud which revealed the  
grim abyss had vanished. His face was im-  
penetrable as a dense fog; the cold intellect had  
subdued the throbbing heart.

Calmly and carefully, with the precision he  
would exercise if recounting the assets of one of  
his companies, he went through the full history  
of recent events. It is not necessary to repeat  
his statements here. Karl, when I met him,  
was more explicit, because he explained causes  
as well as effects. Grier asked my help as a  
friend and trustworthy counsellor. My mission  
was to win his son back to a more rational view  
of life. As in many another desperate plight,  
of nations as well as individuals, the *status quo*  
*ante* was the one desirable solution of the  
difficulty.

I promised to co-operate to the best of my

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ability, and I was pleased then to think, as I am now to know, that my distressed friend quitted me in a more hopeful mood than he had experienced during the previous month. It was no child's task he imposed. A week earlier Karl had promised his father, on his word of honor, that he would commit no rash or desperate act until four weeks had passed. Seven days had gone already, and the extraordinary circumstances which lay behind that sinister promise were more potent than ever. "Young fool!" the cynic may mutter, but even a cynic can be asked to suspend judgment until he has heard the facts.

Well, Grier had gone. I was going out for a light supper at a quiet restaurant — the full-dress magnificence of the hotel dining-rooms was distasteful to an Ishmael in tweed — when a waiter came with a card: "Mr. Karl Grier!"

Honestly, it did not occur to me at once how Karl became aware of my presence, in view of his father's assurance that the telegram to Heidelberg was an absolute secret. Every man has his limitations, and the use of a sixth sense in the ordinary affairs of life was ever new to me. Nevertheless, here was Karl himself, and his appearance gave me a shock productive of that imaginary shakiness which

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elderly ladies of considerable weight describe when they say:

"You might have knocked me down with a feather!"

Light literature, helped by the stage, must have created a lean, hollow-eyed, somewhat consumptive type of person when the ravages of passion, aided and abetted by darkly mysterious natural attributes, come to be portrayed. Of course, I last saw Karl in the heyday of youth and physical perfection, when face and figure might have served Phidias as model for the sculpture of Helios, the sungod. I am not exaggerating. Even the famous Greek, contemplating some chryselephantine marvel, found no higher ideal than the human form at its best, and nature, having determined to break the fetters of that long-imprisoned extra sense, took good care to select a notable subject for its display.

Therefore, while such a fine combination of athlete and thinker could scarce have fallen to the poor standard of the popular novelist's cataleptic hero, the elder Grier's revelations had prepared me, by inference, for a wasted and shrunken Karl, a six-foot volcano whose inner fire had wofully consumed the outer substance. Indeed, I may ask what *you* would have thought if told piteously to remember the

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manner of Constantine's death, and bidden to strive and avert a tragedy with a definite date assigned to it. How would such facts look on a life insurance proposal, for instance?

Hence, the pleasant voice and outstretched hand of a Karl who had the physique of one of Ouida's Horse-Guard captains came as an agreeable but nevertheless bewildering surprise. Here was a man whose splendid proportions would attract attention anywhere. He was faultlessly dressed, so far as modern fashion may garb the mere male. He carried himself with the ease of good society. His eager face had the bronze of the open air and the clear texture of healthy living. Altogether, there could be no more astounding contrast submitted to a stubborn intelligence than this fine-looking young man, with his distinguished air, his happy insouciance, and his gray-haired father pleading for a son's life.

"You didn't expect to see me, eh?" cried he, throwing aside his overcoat and subsiding into a chair. "Poor old dad! I'm a dreadful worry to him just now, and I knew he had some scheme in his mind last night when he kept glancing at me under those deep eyebrows of his. So to-night, when he was late for dinner, I sent a telegonic ray after him. I was just as glad to see you step out of the train

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as he was. And you are far more sympathetic. I simply can't get him to realize that I am unable to control my unhappy faculties at times. He thinks you can cut off the sixth sense as one switches out the light. By Jove! I wish I knew the electrician who could disconnect me!"

"I don't understand you, but I am delighted to find you looking so well," said I. "From your father's brief report —"

"You expected to meet a most woebegone individual. Well, I'm not. I was never better in my life. But the pace cannot last. Unless something happens, some planet-sent intervention which I fail to foresee, I am condemned like any felon. Was I right in warning the old man of a pending catastrophe? I think so. The news of my sudden death might be fatal to him. Now, at any rate, he is prepared for it."

He caught my critical, not to say suspicious, glance and laughed. Never did a "condemned felon" regard his doom so cheerfully.

"That is quite right," he said. "See if you can detect any signs of insanity. Sir Harley Dresser did the same thing when, to please my father, I went to him. He abandoned the idea, however, and gave me some fever mixture, as he fancied I might have caught a chill after some hard chukkars at polo."

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"You have no need to convince *me* that you are a phenomenon," I protested.

"No. I should think not, indeed, after poor Constantine's affair. Nevertheless, you absolutely refuse to believe — and I am speaking only of rational, scientific belief — that this most unpleasant telegnomy may kill me as it killed him."

"Did it kill him?"

"There is nothing more certain. I tell you that because you know I was in no way responsible. I simply burnt him up, fused him, as the motor-men say, and it was his own fault, because he persisted in getting in my way. You know that resistance is the principle of the incandescent electric lamp. Of malice aforethought, the electrician sticks a thin carbon filament in the middle of a thick wire which will carry a certain current. The filament cannot carry the load, so it becomes red hot and shrivels, the process being retarded by the creation of a vacuum. Constantine was the filament; that is all."

"Have you — er — are there other human filaments —"

"I hope not. I have not encountered any, I am glad to say; but there is a reason for everything if only we can discover it, and my current is not murderous unless it has a cer-

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tain direction and intensity. Both of those conditions have been absent for five years, so there are no other crimes, even involuntary ones, to my charge."

"I hope you are overrating your power, even in the case of Constantine," I said.

"It may be so. I am only guessing vaguely at a theory, and using the analogy of known things. But Macpherson was right when he described me as an induction coil. I give off magnetism at a terrific voltage. Apply this interesting mechanism to the ordinary means of seeing and hearing, which you may liken to a bar of soft iron, and you have the first feasible definition of telegnomy."

"I shall be only too glad to hear an intelligent scientific explanation of your sixth sense when the fog which has settled steadily over my wits since I reached London has cleared away," I broke in. "What I am really concerned with now is the alarm which your father is experiencing on your account, and quite needlessly, I suppose."

He leaned confidentially nearer, his arms resting on his knees; and his finely chiseled face thrust forward with keen intentness.

"You had better follow the track I am providing," he said. "I have the consoling belief that you will ultimately comprehend me,



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and that will be something gained. Since we tried experiments in polarization in the *Mitre* at Oxford I have advanced somewhat in knowledge. Of course it is difficult to describe thought in language adapted to mechanical apparatus, though, when comparisons are set up, the similarity of the body to a steam engine driving a dynamo, to which certain electrical devices are attached, is simply amazing. Have you ever studied electricity?"

"No," I said.

"Well, then, I must explain two things to you. In the first place, you can imagine a current passing along a wire from one side of a room to the other. When a circuit is made a bell rings. Now, the wire which carries that current may be insulated thoroughly, yet it diffuses around it a certain quantity of static electricity, or magnetism, which constitutes an aura."

"Ah, an old friend, met in many a clairvoyant novel and mesmeric séance!"

"Yet the aura has dynamic existence apart from fiction. Place a smaller wire, equipped with an electro-magnet yielding to one tenth of the force carried by wire No. 1, in the same field, but wholly separate, and you will find that by completing the first circuit the resultant magnetism affects the second wire, and *its* bell

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rings also, only with considerable diminished strength. Well, sweep away your visible appliances, regard me as wire No. 1, and mankind in general as wire No. 2, and you have a fairly accurate notion of the manner in which I can ascertain, and even control, other people's words and movements at any given moment."

"How about me?" I demanded. "I was exceedingly anxious to communicate with you the other evening, but nothing happened, to *my* knowledge."

"Had I known your wish, and you had given voice to it, it would have been different. But that brings me to my second illustration. The force, whatever it is, which travels forth comes back again with absolutely unimpaired vigor, though possibly in some other form. You can prove that little recognized fact by experiment with any sparking machine. Now, there is only one human being alive, so far as I know, who can actually supply the full magnetic complement of my electric field. In different words, there is but one other creature on earth tuned to my pitch. Owing to certain impending circumstances I fear a collapse for her, or through her, which will, beyond question, be accompanied by a more complete catastrophe for me."

Karl was speaking so seriously, his words were so evidently the outcome of deep reflection, that

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I found myself as profoundly imbued with the vital importance of the matter as he was himself.

"Are you alluding to the Honorable Nora Cazenove or to Miss Margaret Hutchinson?" I asked.

The bewildering pendulum-swing from talk of sudden and unprovided death back to light-hearted and careless gaiety was not the least puzzling feature of Karl's present attitude; he straightened himself in his chair and laughed gleefully.

"I wonder if you can discover the answer unaided!" he cried. "I'll tell you what. There's a reception at Sandilands' house to-night. Just slip on your regulation clothes, and I'll take you there. After you have seen Nora, you shall give me your opinion!"

## CHAPTER XVII

### I MEET NORA CAZENOVE

"HAvING carried what may be termed your technical exposition so far, why do you stop short at the really important issue?" I asked.

"Oh, come now!" he cried with ready raillery, "when a patient describes his symptoms to a doctor he does not pass to the next stage and name his disease."

Amidst present perplexities and the confusion of quickly gathering memories of earlier years, there was one distinctive characteristic of Karl's Mahatmalike faculty which stood out prominently. The exercise of his sixth sense never affected his gay personality. If he showed anger or concern it was wholly vicarious, a sympathetic sentiment inspired by certain facts which influenced the lives of others. Once, indeed, to my knowing, if not more frequently, he had obtained a reflex or sub-conscious knowledge of Maggie Hutchinson's emotions. But even in this instance my theory apparently held good. Alas for romance and the first shaft of love! Five years ago he was not only ready, after a pang or two, to fall in with her decree of banish-

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ment, but to-day I was to meet his fiancée in a young woman of the market type! This contradictory, self-effacing attitude was, of course, brought out more pronouncedly than ever by the haphazard views he expressed on the chance, or, it might be, the certainty, of his own early death. To see Karl, the personification of manly strength and good health, sitting in my room, and hear him coolly endorsing his father's heart-broken statement as to his approaching dissolution, was the most absurdly exasperating experience ever vouchsafed to me.

I know quite well that men and women of high degree — and by that I mean the true aristocracy of man, not the base metal so often stamped with misleading titles — will face unavoidable death with a sedateness, even a sober humor, which is the topmost rung of the long ladder climbed by human progress. A shipwreck, a battle, a lost cause — these are tangible things and excuse all. "This is the most glorious day of my life," said the crippled Girondist, Sillery, when sentenced to death. "What, Valazé," said Brissot to another, who fell in seeming faintness, "are you losing your courage?" "No, I am dying," was the reply; Valazé had plunged a dagger into his heart. A British officer, about to be crucified by Chinese, was offered an easier death if he would admit that China was

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greater than England. His enemies knew some French but no English. His French was that of the provincial grammar school of other days, but he cried boldly: "La Hongleterre est la première nation de la monde!" They understood him, not being Frenchmen, and an enraged mandarin gave the signal for his instant execution. Well, you take off your hat to the memory of the brave, and you hope that, in similar straits, you would carry yourself with equal dignity.

But I do not think the man breathes who could gage Karl's dispassionate mood in that hour. I admit that I was utterly befogged. I went into my bedroom to change my clothing. The door was open, and I heard Karl rise, approach the window, obviously with no more serious intent than a glance into the street, and begin to whistle. That might be the stoicism of despair. But the whistling changed to humming, and from humming he verted to singing:

For she was the Belle of New York,  
The subject of all the town talk.  
She made the whole Bowery  
Fragrant and flowery  
When she went out for a walk. . . .

This was too much. I stuck my enraged head round the corner of the door. He stopped his lilting.

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"By Jove!" he said, "you must be a lightning change artist."

"Karl!" I cried indignantly, "for goodness' sake jump into a hansom, go to your father, and tell him to dismiss from his mind the stupid nightmare with which you have managed to imbue him."

"You have evidently missed the exact point of some of my remarks," he retorted pleasantly. "I told you, among other things, that I wrestled with the problem of candor versus concealment some time ago."

"But you cannot be in earnest. Either you are mad or I am."

"Both, my dear fellow. Believe me, temporary insanity is largely on the increase. The average man cannot withstand the strain. I fancy you will find there is a quaint analogy between the number of maniacs per mille and the number of editions published each day by the evening newspapers. When the jaded intellect is called on, every few minutes, to watch three race meetings, six county cricket matches, and probably a test match, the war — there is always a war — the German Emperor, the yacht race, the latest scandal, the latest play —"

Pshaw! I let up, as Hooper would have said, and determined to drift with the tide into the realm of queer happenings. The change in my

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costume rendered the hotel's restaurant approachable. Eat to-day I must, no matter who died to-morrow. Karl agreed to keep me company while I tackled the homeliest *plat* which a £3,000 per annum chef would condescend to cook, and thus, unwittingly, was I advanced a stage in my inquiry.

We found the palatial apartment tenanted by late diners and early suppers. A waiter would have whisked us into an inconvenient corner, but Karl stayed him.

"Where is Jules?" he asked.

"Le voilà, m'sieur," and the man indicated the bulky form of the head waiter in the far depths of white and gold.

Karl looked steadily across the little tables with their twos that were company and their threes that were not. Had he fired at Jules with an air-gun that ponderous person could not have wheeled round more readily. Moreover, he came straight to us, his broad face set in a wide grin.

"Ah, dere you are, M'sieur Karl!" he cried. "I always know ven you come in, is it not?"

"Always," replied Karl, imperturbably. After compliments, I gave my order. The manner of Jules' summoning was hidden from both the head waiter himself and his satellite.



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"Is that what the women mean when they call you 'The Magnet'?" I inquired.

He laughed, with that contagious merriment which sends ripples of content across his hearers' faces whether they are in his company or not. But he took care that his answer reached no other ears than mine.

"No," he said, "the women mean something quite different. At any ordinary distance I can attract practically any one whom I know. They come and talk to me, without being aware that I have summoned them. It is not a very remarkable feat when you realize that we all do something like that, in any church, or theater, or other place where people are gathered together. The magnetic effect is doubled, at least, when you use opera-glasses. Why?"

These red herrings drawn across the trail were useless.

"What *do* the women mean?" I persisted.

"Ask 'em, my dear fellow. Perhaps they may explain. The dear creatures adore sensation. I am told that some of them will stick on a switchback railway until their purses are emptied. A woman's nervous system is more refined than a man's. That is why she likes swinging, or, to be accurate, being swung. It thrills her."

Karl, in this bantering mood, was a revelation. Were I not really very much distressed

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and concerned by the statements made by him and his father I should have been somewhat annoyed with him. As it was, I determined to meet him on his own ground.

"You have evidently become quite a man about town since last I saw you," I said.

"How have I earned that questionable distinction in your eyes?"

"On the *post hoc propter hoc* principle. Your nickname, your philosophy, your light generalities about the opposite sex, are labels on the brand."

"Ah! It has not struck you that both you and the women may be mistaken?"

I looked up quickly. The mocking laugh had gone. The grave, earnest face of the Karl of five years ago was before me. Nevertheless, his fencing had stirred within me the spirit of resistance.

"I am prepared to vouch for the fact that one woman knew you well enough not to be mistaken," I said.

"May not her knowledge explain her attitude? Of course you are speaking of Maggie Hutchinson. Do not forget that she shut the door in my face."

"If it be not treason to the Honorable Nora Cazenove, may I say that the door might yield to a resolute attack?"

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For answer he leaned on the table, intertwined his fingers, and gazed at me straight in the eyes.

"Never was fortress besieged more patiently," he said. "It is only within the past few weeks, that I have received any answer, and that is why — But surely you will agree with me that the full and explicit story of my life had better be deferred until a more convenient occasion."

Now, lest I be accused of romancing, I shall not endeavor to analyze very closely the most curious and agreeable illusion which held me during the few seconds needed for the delivery of his protest. Instead of the crowded restaurant I saw a moonlit lake, with the terraces of an Italian garden rising in black and white lines of closely clipped hedges, gravel paths, smooth lawns, and broad stairs with curving balustrades. On the topmost and widest lawn, where the grass had the resemblance of a black carpet owing to the shadows cast by a castellated building in the background, three people were walking — actually in motion, that is — not in the fixed attitudes of a picture, but moving. Two were women, one dressed in black and the other in white, and the moonlight glinting on their robes had an effect worthy of Gustave Doré, so startling was the contrast, so instantly did they hold the eye. With them

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was a man, a tall man; but that was all I caught of the scene, for my ears were listening to Karl throughout, and the change in his voice brought back my scattered senses.

And a waiter spoke.

"Your fish, sir. Sole Colbert, sir."

I think I must have gazed at him blankly, but Karl came to my assistance.

"Tell the chef we are in a hurry," he said.

"Then there will be no delay in the kitchen."

The man quitted us. I stuck a needless fork into the amiable sole.

"Have you been hypnotizing me?" I demanded angrily.

"You may call it that if you like," he said calmly. "You saw Maggie and her mother."

"Did I!" I snapped. "And who was the man?"

"I do not know his name. I decline to listen. But I am fairly certain he is an Italian, of good birth, and he is madly in love with Maggie."

I thawed. There was a reason for the trick he had played me.

"And she?" I demanded.

"Like me, she thinks that marriage is a duty."

"There appears to be material for a neurotic novel in the present situation."

"Far more. It may supply two tragedies.

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But why are you harpooning that unresisting fish?"

Again I resolved to drift. It was clear that Karl meant me to travel along the road he had already mapped out. So I ate my dinner, and drank a couple of glasses of wine, and kept asking myself how it was possible for my young friend to produce so easily a slight but distinct hypnosis in a veteran like me.

Then I remembered the poker-polarizing of the Mitre Hotel, and I dug my elbow into his ribs as a hansom carried us westwards.

"By Jove!" I cried, "I have it! Constantine's death interfered, in some way, with the private telegnomy line Maggie and you had set up; but recent events have repaired the breakage. Constantine, living, supplied the earth contact for your ethereal wires. When he died you were forcibly separated, practically torn asunder, and his place had to be filled again before you could resume communication on the same basis as before."

"You are not far wrong," he said dryly. "But you have lived so much abroad that you forget the propriety due to the British hansom. If you wave your arms so excitedly, the policeman at the top of St. James' Street will stop us, and I shall be compelled to magnetize him."

"Could you?" I inquired irrelevantly.

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"Ask the gov'nor what I did to the *douanier* at the Gare du Nord who wished to confiscate a pound of the only tobacco the old man can smoke. I made him chalk a whole ship-load of luggage like an automaton. I have progressed somewhat since I left Oxford. Were it not for other less agreeable features, I could get a fair amount of amusement out of my powers of suggestion. It is not altogether puzzling when you come to reason it out. Granted that I am a sort of human magnet, I must obviously be able to control my fellow-men, especially those who are most susceptible to external influences."

"When I extricate Maggie and you from your present dilemma I shall demand your aid for the utter squelching and making everlastingly ridiculous of some of my dearest enemies," I said cheerfully.

"Better use me soon," said he lightly, yet there was a chilling and somber significance in his words that recalled me to the reality of the peril of which he spoke so jestingly.

When we reached Lord Sandilands' town house our cab took rank behind a score of broughams and other conveyances setting down guests at the striped canvas alley which shut off the sacred portal of fashion from the vulgar gaze. *Odi profanum vulgus et arceo*: "I hate

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the common rabble and keep it at a distance," wrote Horace, who must have lived in the Berkeley Square of Old Rome. What stern barriers are those strips of canvas and lengths of red carpet.

We passed several gorgeous footmen (it is an old phrase, but the truth is ever thus) and two detectives, deposited our hats and coats somewhere, made our way up a flight of broad stairs, and my inquisitive eyes fell on a very handsome young woman, exquisitely dressed, but a trifle on the heavy side of the scale to my thinking, whose position, no less than the equal delight with which she welcomed all comers, proclaimed that this was the hostess, Nora Cazenove.

The conventional smile flew from her face as painted scenes grow mawkish in sunlight when she saw Karl. She blushed very prettily, and her very soul leaped to her eyes.

"I have been looking for you this hour or more," she cried, and I half expected her to throw her splendid arms around his neck.

"I would have been here sooner were I not detained by the unexpected arrival of an old friend. Let me present him."

She extended her hand to me.

"The older the friend of Karl's the more pleased I am to see him," she said.

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"And now that I have met you I can only wonder that any friendship could have resisted the strain he must have felt during the last hour."

There we stood, the three of us, two men and a woman, murmuring nice artificialities, bowing and smirking in the glare of a London drawing-room, while in an Italian garden, at that hour, three others, two women and a man, were talking of Heaven knows what topic, which, nevertheless, was indissolubly bound up with our trivial discourse.

For a fleeting instant I had a glimpse of some strong, imperishable, intangible bond which held together the hidden things of life. Then I heard Nora Cazenove's aristocratic accents.

"Soon I shall be relieved from my present duty. Then you and I must have a nice long talk."

So I passed on with the crowd.



## CHAPTER XVIII

### THE PROBLEM TAKES SHAPE

THERE are certain mortals, I suppose, who take delight in "At Homes," receptions, musicales, and the rest of the social devices which enable fashionable folk to meet of evenings and learn the latest scandal. Personally, I would pass an hour far more agreeably in a fever hospital, provided the resident doctor were a good fellow, and not too busy to smoke a pipe with me. Hence, because of the unusual transactions of that memorable night, the proceedings at Sandilands' house stand out in my mind in quite cameo-like precision as contrasted with other similar gatherings I have attended. Nor was this result achieved by meeting notable personages. There was the same setting of tow-headed fiddlers and stout sopranos — judicious artistes who earn a bank manager's annual salary in twenty minutes — the same well-bred insolence on the part of some, the same toadying by others, the same ruthless incivility in the supper rooms by all, that may be seen at any like festival

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in the West End of London any night during the season. But, as shall be revealed speedily, the unrehearsed incidents of this particular society comedy were such as cut notches in the memory.

I met a man with a grievance. He insisted on telling me why the Government had denied him the poet-laureateship. That was a safe topic. Politeness demanded an occasional "Dear me!" or "You don't say so!" from me: he did the rest.

From the safe anchorage of his eloquence I was able, at leisure, to watch and, to a certain extent, sum up, Nora Cazenove. Her genealogy, briefly sketched by the older Grier, partly accounted for certain deficiencies in her. It was reasonable to assume that her mother was a beautiful woman, of extraordinary acuteness within a somewhat narrow sphere. Like the girl in the ballad, her face was her fortune, and she deemed herself well paid, I doubt not, when she bartered her good looks and faultless form for a title and a big annual rent-roll.

Lord Sandilands, whom I had never seen until that night, instantly reminded me of that scathing dictum of Swift's: "A weak, diseased body, a meager countenance, and sallow complexion are the true marks of noble blood." Gulliver, you will find, if you look the passage

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up, gave his horse friend an even more drastic explanation of an occasional lapse by the aristocracy into robustness of physique; but Lord Sandilands, judged by the Dean's standard, was a genuine peer. Yet he was a harmless little creature. I fancy he received a mild shock every time his Juno-like daughter called him "father."

At any rate, I amused myself by studying the girl, and I came to the conclusion that had Karl scoured the earth he could not have found a more exact antithesis to Maggie Hutchinson than her successful rival, the Honorable Nora Cazenove.

They had the common attributes of good looks, good style, and what passes current for good education among young ladies of twenty-three or thereabouts. In all else they differed. If I were seeking worthy tabernacles for merely intellectual concepts of what we mean when we speak of soul and body, I should choose those two girls as supplying the requisite shrines. Though my recollection of Maggie was not quite definite, I could recall her Madonna expression, the spirituality which diffused its mild beams over a grateful world from her brown eyes. Nora, on the other hand, was what her lineage proclaimed, a purchased standard of bodily excellence. Maggie could

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forget all, even life itself, in the exaltation of music, the passion of a song, the transient loveliness of a sunset, whereas Nora must be a fine equestrian, fond of good food and hearty exercise, a woman in whom the wonderful maternal instinct would be less divine than human. I am not blind to the lack of precision in that last distinction. Some day a man may be free to write as he thinks, provided always that he has honorable and useful intent, but that day is not yet.

I was so wrapped up in my thoughts that I made a rather bad break with the would-be laureate.

"What would you have said," he fiercely demanded, "if the Prime Minister told you that your latest volume of poems was a collection of turgid nonsense?"

"I would have said that he was quite right," I answered blithely, for a man can always run down his own work with safety.

Then it dawned on me that the Prime Minister had expressed himself thus strongly, not on my book, but on the poet's.

"Of course," I added, "it was quite evident that he had not read a line of your verse."

"Confound it, haven't I just related to you how I found him in the summer-house, and compelled him to listen? yes, blocked up the

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only exit, until I recited to him the whole of my ode to 'Eternity.'"

"The subject was too vast for his intelligence."

"Not it. It is a shameful fact that no man of poetic tastes can gain a politician's ear nowadays unless he titillates it with a patriotic jingle. As a forlorn hope I have written a threnody on the fleet. If I can find a good rhyme for 'guns' I am made. Can you help? 'Buns,' 'duns,' 'nuns' and 'tuns,' are hardly suitable. 'Suns,' 'runs,' and 'shuns,' I have used. Just come into this corner while I —"

Miss Cazenove rescued me.

"At last I have a moment," she cried, showing her perfect teeth in a thoroughly good-natured smile. "You don't mind my carrying him off, do you?" she went on sweetly, as she noted the look of disappointment on my companion's face. "I have such a lot to say to him."

We hurried away. She laughed merrily when I told her of my escape.

"He is a real terror," she agreed. "One day he tackled dad after luncheon. Do you know my father? He says 'Gad' to everything he doesn't understand, and most other things as well. But on that occasion he lost his temper and said 'Rats!'"

That put us on good terms. I looked forward

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to an agreeable if not very soulful chat with my radiant hostess, but I was fated to learn, for the hundredth time, that every woman is a born actress. Even the angelic Maggie was a stage adept when it became necessary to cloak her emotions from the public ken.

"Are you hungry?" asked Miss Cazenove, guiding me skilfully through the crowded suite of rooms.

"No," I said, flattering myself that the question was only prompted by hospitality.

"Then come this way."

Before I well knew what was happening, I was whisked through a curtained door into a passage left purposely unlighted. Clinging to my arm, but really compelling me onward, the girl led me to another door. She entered, and switched on the electric light. Evidently this was her boudoir, but she left me little time to take stock of my surroundings.

"Sit down here," she said. "I don't care what people think. I *must* talk with you about Karl. Of course I might have waited until to-morrow and asked you to call, but now that you are here I am consumed with impatience. No, sit just where you are, please. I want to see your face."

"I am a most skilled prevaricator," I said, for her maneuvering was of the Napoleonic order.

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I was to be attacked by horse, foot, and artillery, cross-examined and scrutinized at the same time. We sat on a roomy Chesterfield, an article of furniture which suggests insidious confidences; a cluster of lamps equipped with reading reflectors shot their rays directly at us. Moreover, she did not seem to heed the fact that she laid herself open to equally searching criticism on my part. The first shot fired in the encounter showed that my adversary scorned subterfuge.

"Who is she?"

"Really —" I protested.

"Oh, you know very well whom I mean. Karl is engaged to me now, and is going to marry me — I shall see to that. But I must know who the girl is with whom he has been in love since five years ago."

I temporized.

"Five years ago! You can hardly expect me to recollect anything of serious importance concerning the love affairs of a young gentleman at college and a young lady who may have worn her hair in two plaits, tied at the ends with a big bow —"

"Please, please!" she insisted. "As if I did not know how some girl has entered his very life, until he regards all other women with unheeding eyes, and even conducts himself towards me in what he considers to be the correct attitude

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of an engaged man. What is the spell she has cast upon him? Is she more beautiful than I, more sympathetic, more capable of devotion? Why is his father so troubled about him? Why have you been brought from Heidelberg to help in dispelling the cloud which has settled on him?"

"Did Mr. Grier, senior, tell you that?"

"No. No one tells me anything. Won't *you* have pity on me? I have the wildest dreams, but I know some of them are true. And I dreamed of you. I even saw you. I would have known you anywhere. When you came up the stairs with Karl to-night I could have shrieked aloud, but I dug my nails into my hands and restrained myself. See, here are the gloves I wore. I have changed them for others, but I kept them to prove to you how truly I am speaking."

She took from a pocket a crumpled pair of white gloves, *peau de chevreau*. The finger seams were burst, the palms cut in four half moons. So, though the words nearly choked me, I was forced to say soothingly:

"I imagine you are troubling your pretty head about a matter of little moment, Miss Cazenove. I am quite certain you have no serious rival. Karl is the soul of honor —"

She started to her feet and grasped my



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shoulder with a vehemence she was hardly conscious of.

"You men everlastingly prate of honor. Honor explains everything. Provided Karl is scrupulously attentive to me he can take another woman to his heart, kiss her lips, her eyes, her hair, breathe her breath, inhale her fragrance, mingle his very soul with hers — that may be honorable to me, but it is the madness of love for her."

"Surely, Miss Cazenove, you are saying that which is not," I cried, and I, too, facing her angrily, jumped up from the cushioned depths of the Chesterfield.

"Am I? Then you do not understand Karl, and still less do you understand Maggie Hutchinson. Ah! *touché*? Think me a jealous woman, if you choose. I am, and I glory in it. But I have a woman's wits as well, and you know in your heart I am not mistaken."

Something must be done to allay the tempest. I had to fling the sixth sense to the winds, and trust to the five of our common heritage to calm this excited beauty.

"I speak in all honesty and truth," I said, "when I tell you that, to the best of my belief, Karl Grier has neither seen, nor spoken to, nor written to Maggie Hutchinson since he was an undergraduate at Oxford."

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She wrung her hands passionately.

"Heaven keep me from tears!" she wailed.  
"If I cry I shall yield utterly. Oh, dear, oh, dear! I so looked forward to meeting you and securing your help. Are you really so ignorant of Karl's powers that you lay stress on what we call seeing and hearing? They mean nothing to him. I am not blind if others are. Oh, if only I did not love him so I might perhaps be more to him!"

I am free to admit that her words stirred me strangely.- Could it be that while I was puzzling my brains with the formulæ of the least considered branches of science, this girl, unaided, almost untaught, had solved the mystery which enfolded the broken love story of Karl and Maggie? Did she share with the dead and gone Armenian the most disastrous attribute of a vector equation to the unmeasured force which united the spiritual existences of her rival and her lover? From the apparently secure foundation of physics and magnetic attraction I was projected into an astral shadow-land, whirled away on an unbridled steed into a kingdom of wild imaginings.

On a sudden in the midst of men and day,  
And while I walk'd and talk'd as heretofore,  
I seemed to move among a world of ghosts  
And feel myself the shadow of a dream.

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Yet it was no mystic but a real woman who faced me in that delightful room. with its Louis Seize furniture, its charming little Corots and water-colors by David Cox, its fragrant perfume of Provençal flowers, and all that air of subtle refinement which clings to the abode of a young and beautiful girl as a well-made gown clings to the contour of her body, never obtrusive, always in exquisite taste, and ever revealing fresh harmonies of line and tint.

Her actress-mother dowered her with the trick of speech, of impassioned gesture. She flung an accusing hand towards me.

"Why do you stand silent?" she demanded. "Is it because of a wayward phantasy that I should have revealed my torturing thoughts to you, a mere stranger? Why are you here to-night? To help Karl, you may say. Then help me, also, or you may go through the rest of your life haunted by most unpleasing specters."

"I will gladly do all in my power to help Karl, my dear young lady, and it will be an added joy if the counsel and assistance I can lend to my friend prove equally beneficial to you. But surely you must see that I am moving in a maze. You speak of that which I do not comprehend. If, indeed, you and others are subject to unexplained manifestations, it is all-important that

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we should discuss them fully, rationally, and in an environment more suitable than the present time and place. Then, and only by such means, can we reach anything in the nature of a logical conclusion."

I felt that my speech was stilted, but I was vainly searching for a more equable base of action than her wild statements afforded. Her lips curved into a bitter smile, but there was no softening in the gleaming eyes.

"Leave me to judge of conventions which appeal so powerfully to you, a writer, a Bohemian, a man who stood on a Liverpool quay while Paul Constantine was drowning!" she cried, and each word formed a crescendo of scornful negation of my right to dictate to her.

Nor did she pay heed to the positive start of alarm with which I marked her utterance of the Bohemian's name. Her mood changed in an instant. She caught my arm again in pitiful entreaty.

"Forgive me if I say that which may sound outrageous in your ears," she said. "I am so unstrung, so much in need of one who will sympathize rather than chide, believe rather than question."

"I take you at your word, Miss Cazenove. Now, let me recant my momentary lapse into smug propriety. I admit my belief. I am con-

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vinced that Karl possesses some dreadful force which is quite demoralizing when it meets resistance. It is not his fault, nor Miss Hutchinson's, nor yours, nor was its influence wholly condemnable in the man whose name you have just mentioned. It is something outside and beyond our ordered senses. Very well, we can only deal with it by the use of those same senses. The first requisite is candor, the second, critical analysis. But, however distraught you may be, you must admit that midnight, in your boudoir, in a house overrun with your guests, gives us no opportunity of sanely examining a disturbing problem. Come now, be guided by me; I have a son nearly your age, and you may trust me to take a calm view of these things which excite you so terribly."

"And you will not deem me mad when I tell you that when Karl marries me it will kill me if I still feel that his soul belongs to another woman?"

"Indeed I shall not hold any such vain thought. Don't you see that marriage, under such conditions, is not to be thought of? But there! Let us not commence our inquiry now. I am even resisting the temptation to ask you how you knew of Constantine's death. No! please begin by being patient. I shall perhaps ask for a little obedience, standing, as I do, in

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*loco parentis*. Let us arrange a meeting to-morrow. What do you say to a stroll in the Park after luncheon? Or, if the weather is wet, shall I call here if you can count on being alone?"

Tacitly, we ignored both Lord Sandilands and Mrs. Grundy. They were estimable persons, doubtless, but they would need electrocution ere they understood telegonomy.

She was about to answer when a light knock on the half-open door announced a visitor. It was Karl. He smiled wistfully. He had the semblance of one who knows that a catastrophe has occurred, a catastrophe foreseen yet unpreventable.

"I expected to find you here, Nora," he said. "In fact, I followed you here in my mind, and I agree that it will be better for you, and possibly for others, if certain explanations are given. Let you two meet to-morrow, by all means. Then, you must send for me and tell me what has to be done."

He spoke with a weariness which the tender inflection of his voice did not disguise from me. He knew already *what was to be done*. It came upon me with a shuddering dread that the only way to destroy his inexplicable power was to destroy its origin. Had he the right to live, and, whether conscious or not, inflict mental

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suffering and ultimate death on certain unfortunate human beings who strove helplessly to check the overpowering force of the magnetism which flowed from him? That was an affrighting problem. Nor was it made easier by Nora Cazenove's present amazing attitude.

The fiery anguish which convulsed her lithe frame and blazed up in her eyes while she poured forth her woes to me had gone with the mere sight of him. The change was miraculous, as wonderful in its way as the conversion of Pygmalion's marble goddess into flesh and blood.

A moment ago she was the central figure of a tragedy; now she was just a girl hopelessly in love, and she clung to Karl's arm and gazed up into his face, as they passed before me along the corridor, for all the world as any smitten Phyllis might fondle and adore her Corydon. And then, an astounding thing happened.

## CHAPTER XIX

### THE UNBIDDEN GUEST

THE corridor was a short, broad passage. It was adorned with Raeburn portraits, a Lely or two, and some small Sheraton cabinets laden with rare china — treasures dimly revealed by rays borrowed from the electric lamps in Miss Cazenove's boudoir. The open door of her room permitted a bright panel of light to fall across the parquet floor. Beyond lay artistic gloom, bounded, as I knew, by the curtained entrance to the suite of apartments given over to the reception.

My eyes were fixed directly on Karl's tall figure and on the magnificent creature, in some wonderful Paris gown worthy of her statuesque proportions, who clung so trustingly to his arm. My thoughts — well, my thoughts were busy enough, but I vouch for it that my mind was clear and my perceptiveness neither alert nor abstracted. Yet, no sooner did I step into the darker area than I saw distinctly a glow, or radiance, emanating from the girl's bare neck, shoulders, and arms.



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Imagination played me no trick, or, if I were indeed the victim of fancy, the delusion was extraordinarily accurate in detail, because it seemed that clothing, however slight its substance, choked the feeble gleam. Therefore, only the visible portions of her arms between the semi-diaphanous shoulder-straps and the ends of the long gloves were irradiated. The phosphorescent effect was indescribably beautiful. Of course, in sober reflection, I think phosphorescence a misnomer, being a sheer impossibility, and I am driven to adopt a natural simile in likening it to the pure, green, shining light emitted by the female glow-worm, so-called, to attract the male beetle of its species.

I would have voiced my amazement, notwithstanding the spell cast on me by the loveliness of this fascinating apparition, were it not that, even as I tried to find words, both Karl and his companion vanished from my sight, and I was confronted by a totally different scene. Instead of the half-visible corridor, I tenanted a large room, brilliantly illuminated. It is noteworthy, as testifying to my normal condition, that I believed, for an instant, that the communicating door had been opened to allow the pair in front to enter the music salon. This impression quickly yielded to realities,

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Yes, I repeat, realities. No ambiguous phrase would describe the clear-cut recollection I have of that vast square chamber, with its low, Arabesque ceiling, its huge fireplace of Carrara marble, its deep Italian windows, its wealth of carved wainscoting and antique furniture. A log fire burned dully in the grate. Kneeling on a rug near the hearth, but in such a position that I could see her profile, was a slimly built girl, dressed in white, whom I recognized as Maggie Hutchinson.

Seemingly, she was alone. Tears were streaming from her eyes, and her lips quivered, yet I had a queer belief that her agitation arose from some unhappy combination of sorrow fraught with gladness, one of those tantalizing experiences sent to vex frail mortality, wherein, if only circumstances could be altered, abiding melancholy would forthwith become extravagant joy. Were I a painter, seeking inspiration to depict an angel tempted to rebel but faithful to an eternal vow, I should strive to place on canvas the expression of Maggie Hutchinson's face caught in that transient glimpse.

And that was all.

The door leading to the heedless throng of guests was really flung open, I heard the cackle of conversation blending with a piano solo,

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my dazed eyes rested on Karl holding back the curtain with a questioning smile on his face, and I returned to solid earth again. Now, I had seen Nora Cazenove surrounded with a halo, and Maggie Hutchinson on her knees crying, within the space of six and seven short strides. Nevertheless, keen as my wits were to note these things, they were slow enough to return to a just appreciation of my surroundings.

Karl told me afterwards that I arranged to meet Nora at the Stanhope Gate, or call at her house, at 2.30 P.M., next day, and he said that I left it to the Meteorological Bureau to decide which rendezvous we would attend. Anyhow, I forget using any such phrase or even making the appointment, and I first regained my grasp of current events when we were seated in the brougham which Karl had caused to be summoned by telephone.

"What do you think of it all now?" he asked in the unemotional voice of a man who might be alluding to the singing and the fiddling and the scandal.

"Karl, I am worn out," I answered. "I cannot center my ideas to-night."

"I also am worn out," he said. "I shall be even more weary to-morrow, but I must endure my weariness without complaint. There-

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fore, I wonder what you will say when you know the truth."

"That light — on Nora — did you see it?"

"Yes. Oh, yes."

"Was she conscious of it?"

"Not of the light. That is resistance. You saw Maggie, too?"

"Of course. You made me see her."

"That is better. You are on the right track. Soon you will understand the magnitude of the task I am called on to accomplish during the next few weeks — until I crack up, in fact. Here is your hotel. *À demain!* I shall dine with you, and then you can tell me what Nora says. I know what she thinks, but women are secretive."

The drive through the cool night air restored my faculties, but I was physically exhausted. The long journey, the shock of seeing Karl's father in a paroxysm of agonized fear, the change in Karl himself, and the quite extraordinary æsthetic manifestations I had received — those latter probably taking a good deal more out of me than I allowed for — were sufficient to weary any man. Nevertheless, my brain was active enough in a commonplace way, and the thought was borne in on me that I needed assistance if the fiend which threatened the very lives of several estimable persons were to be exorcised successfully.

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To appeal to some distinguished alienist was out of the question. He would begin by assuming that Karl and Maggie and Nora, not to mention Grier *père* and my eminent self, were mad. In my dilemma I remembered Hooper. Had he accepted that appointment at the Paris Embassy? There was no harm in trying. I wrote a telegram, which I left with the night porter for despatch early in the morning, and it was a real pleasure to read the typewritten slip brought to my bedroom about 9 A.M.: —

“Charing Cross seven this evening. Get Karl to ring off until I arrive — HOOPER.”

His was a cheerful soul. The careless badi-nage of his message was agreeable, and I ate my breakfast in good spirits.

It was a fine morning, with a summer sun beaming from a cloudless sky. It is taking a great risk to state this in cold print, because readers have good memories, and many a dubious eye will be cast on a narrative which records unbroken sunshine in London. Nevertheless, it is true, and, as shall be seen, the weather was an essential factor in the proceedings of that memorable time.

After prolonged absence from Britain, my hats, ties, gloves, and boots required to be Anglicized. Piccadilly and the Burlington absorbed the

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morning comfortably; half-past two o'clock found me loitering, like any young sprig awaiting his best girl, in front of the flower-beds at Stanhope Gate.

The minutes passed. Nora, like every other woman, was unpunctual. The notion did not occur to me at the time, but I am fairly sure now that the girl's dilatoriness, adding a slight pique to the somewhat clandestine nature of the appointment, helped to chase from my mind the shadows of the previous night's troubling experiences.

She came at last. A flower-garden hat, a veil, a fine lace dress and a pink parasol, were effective disguises after the candor of evening attire. I did not recognize this frilly young lady until she spoke to me.

"So you really are here?" she cried, with a little laugh, and looking, I fancied, a trifle embarrassed.

"Did you not expect me?" I countered.

"Oh, one never can tell. Things which look serious under the electric light are apt to assume less dragon-like proportions on such an afternoon as this, and in the Park, of all places."

"I am glad you think so. Some such thought has winged its way to me, too."

Rather a neat allusion to the object of our meeting, don't you think? — a quiet reference

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to the sixth sense, without dragging it in by the scalp, so to speak — but Miss Cazenove shied off the topic.

"I chanced to remember that you said you would be here about this time," she said lamely. "I fear I bored you with my silly confidences last night, even more than poor Mr. M— with his poems."

*Que diable!* Was this the fiery beauty who regaled me at midnight with her tantrums because her lover was moistening with imaginary kisses the lips, the eyes, the very hair of a rival?

"Where a nice young woman is concerned I have neither memory nor conscience," said I, gaily.

"If you keep the one unburthened I shall not trouble the other," she retorted. And then, with an airy dismissing of the subject, she asked: "Which way are you going?"

Will you believe it, I escorted her across the Park, by the diagonal path to Albert Gate, where she parted from me on some shopping pretext, without another word being spoken which referred in any way to Karl or her somewhat strenuous *fiançailles!* I was puzzled, annoyed, elaborately sarcastic with myself, for how was I to know that this youthful goddess' veins were filled with a new ichor, her passions

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soothed and her doubts dispelled by the wonder-working force which her own heart-broken appeal for help had set loose?

A thrice fortunate chance kept Karl and me apart in that hour. Nothing could have restrained me from pooh-poohing the elaborate make-believe in which he and the two girls were living. Had it been so, I tremble now to picture the probable outcome. I can see Karl waving me aside in his quiet way, disdaining to reclaim the pervert by compulsion, and refusing me any further trust. I believe the sequel would have killed me with grief.

As it was, after some hours of undisturbed reflection, I saw the stupidity of my reasoning. Nora Cazenove was natural in her boudoir, artificial in the Park. Once launched on this new stream of logic, I was carried along with a rapidity that left me gasping. Why should I, in a mere pet induced by a woman's vagary (as I fancied it), be so ready to deny that which I had affirmed during several years? Was there aught outrageous in Karl's telegnomic equipment? He, a man — mentally and physically almost perfect according to the precise enough laws which govern human perfection in its ideality — might well possess additional sense-activities when the lowest forms of creation are similarly gifted. There is hardly a vertebrate



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fish in the sea which has not, on both sides of its body, a mucous canal bristling with nerves to enable it to perceive changes in water pressure, or other unknown properties of the element in which it lives — unknown, that is, to us, but quite thoroughly known to the fish. Even man's legitimate sense-organs are inferior to the specialized functions of certain animals. How would Nimrod's nose compare, in the sense of smell, with the fine scent of his favorite hound, or the range of my lady's vision with that of the very much smaller eye of a vulture? As for hearing, ask some friend, learned in anatomy, to discourse to you upon the higher sensitiveness and comparative size of the cochlea, or snail-shell, formation in the internal ear of a desert-bred animal as contrasted with the same appliance in the *genus homo*. This branch of research chastens and humbles the mere man.

While dressing early for dinner, so as to reach the vestibule in good time to welcome Hooper, I wondered how Karl had passed the day. "Worn out" last night, he expected to be "even more weary" when next we met. And then an explanation of his words suggested itself which caused a sudden nerve-shock similar, in some respects, to that felt by the man who, in a crowded house, slept on a made-up bed over the bath. and, awaking drowsily, pulled the

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string of the shower-bath when he wanted water in the morning.

"By Jove!" I yelled, "I have it!"

"Qu' est-ce que vous avez trouvé, m'sieu'?" demanded the startled valet who was arranging my studs.

I suppose the civil young Frenchman thought I was ill, but I reassured him, though my excitement must have made him believe that I was on the verge of lunacy. Karl was using his magnetic force continuously in order to preserve Nora from the torturing consequences of her love for him. That explained her attitude in the Park. He had beaten down in her what he termed "resistance." She was quite passive, utterly permeated with his influence. And Maggie? In all probability she, too, was unconsciously benefiting by her affinity to this human loadstone, while he was wearing himself out, actually consuming himself, in the fierce persistence of the effort to spare them further suffering.

This theory — I might almost term it a positive knowledge so thoroughly did it hold me — explained nearly every feature of the strange events of the preceding twenty-four hours. It fitted in with and amplified my views on the happenings of earlier years, and it gave me the first satisfactory clue to the emotions exhibited by two such contradictory

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personalities as Nora Cazenove and Maggie Hutchinson.

I am sure the valet was glad to see the back of me. I jammed my right foot into the left boot, tried to put on my waistcoat inside out, and fumbled with my tie until he volunteered to arrange it, being prepared (I could see it in his eye) to fight for his life if I grappled with him.

At last, I raced to the elevator. I wanted to telephone to the Griers' house and ask Karl to come at once. But he saved me that period of suspense. He was standing in the atrium, smoking a cigarette. He strolled towards me, and not even my tensely nervous condition — all the more soul-devouring in that I was forced to appear outwardly calm — prevented me from seeing the discreet admiration he won from such ladies as were seated there.

"Ah! there you are!" he cried in his frankly pleasant way. "The papers report another fiasco in the yacht race. Is there ever any wind in New York Bay?"

"Heaps," I said, "or so many hoodlums would not have blown into the States."

We were near enough to shake hands.

"How is Nora?" he asked.

"Just about the same as Maggie."

He winced. In the absorption of my new

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discovery I had forgotten that any flippant allusion to the woman for whose sake he was ready to lay down his life must be painful. Yet, with a single keen glance into my face, he read my true feelings, which, goodness knows, were far removed from the pert words of my lips.

"Forgive me," I said. "I am unnerved by reaching what you described last night as the 'right track!'"

"It must be disturbing."

"If my conclusions are justified," I went on, surveying him with as much coolness as I was capable of, "you ought not to have that appearance of abounding vitality which you undoubtedly possess."

"That is because the weather is clear," he answered lightly. "If it were cloudy, I should be a mere wreck. When the sun shines, or the stars are visible, I have five times the potentiality of a dull day. But you must eat, man alive. Why are we discoursing here? Shall I telephone Jules?"

"No. Wait a few minutes. Hooper is coming."

"Hooper? Frank E. of that ilk?"

"Yes. Luckily, I located him in Paris and wired him. He is due here any moment."

"Well, I shall be delighted to meet him. But I cannot allow my affairs to travel outside a very small circle."

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"And I cannot allow you to wither away on my own responsibility."

"My dear fellow, don't be vexed with me. I am so eaten up with the mad helplessness of it all that I resent the least prying by sceptical outsiders. But if Hooper, or any other man on God's earth, can save me and others from the doom which awaits one or all of us, lay me on the dissecting table before him. I am ready."

Knowledge on his part, and a simple imitative action on mine, turned our eyes simultaneously towards the revolving door of the hotel. Mr. Frank E. Hooper entered, spick and span as if a troubled channel and grimy railway were not. He was followed by a rotund personage, olive-green in complexion, bearing all the outward and visible signs of an inward Jewishness. The sight of this stranger gave me an indefinable thrill, a compound of surprise and fear, with, perhaps, a touch of bewilderment. Why, I cannot tell, but I knew him instantly. I was so taken aback that I found myself staring stupidly at Hooper, who advanced with a cheery cry:

"Well now, who'd have thought to find you both here, and lookin' so fine and dandy, too. This is real good."

He winked at us portentously.

"That's Steindal!" he muttered in a stage

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aside. "Met him in the Gare du Nord, and talked him into comin' to this hotel. Guessed you'd like to see him."

"We are delighted," said Karl, gently. "Won't you introduce us?"

"Eh? Oh, this is great. Mr. Steindal! lend me thine ear a moment. I want to make you and my good friends known to one another. Mr. Karl Grier —"

No sooner did Steindal hear Karl's name than he flushed uncomfortably and backed away. He was perturbed so greatly that Hooper's flow of language stopped abruptly.

But Karl advanced a pace, and there was a steady dominance in his glance which seemed to fascinate while it disconcerted the Jew.

"It is, indeed, a pleasure to meet you," he said. "Come and dine with us. Come just as you are; and you, too, Hooper. It is too late to change."

Without another spoken word he wheeled towards the restaurant, walking across the vestibule with head erect and hands clasped behind his back.

And we three followed, Steindal with the sulki-ness of a stricken dog, Hooper somewhat awed by the unexpected outcome of the surprise he had planned, and I—well, I felt as though some wizard had converted me into an electric eel.

## CHAPTER XX

### STEINDAL GIVES A PUBLIC PERFORMANCE

"SAY," whispered Hooper to me, "Karl looks like a high priest of Baal leading Steindal to slaughter as a sacrificial bull."

I babbled something, it matters not what. All my eyes were bent on the strange meeting between those two. Karl, suavely stern, motioned the Jew to a chair at a table laid for four. They faced each other. Hooper and I took the vacant places. Jules, of course, hastened to us, and his attendant sprites relieved the travelers of overcoats and hats.

Steindal, manifestly ill at ease, glanced around the crowded restaurant. He soon recognized several *habitués*. One man, a well-known Stock Exchange broker, hastened to greet him. While they were speaking, I murmured to Karl:

"Under the circumstances, is this wise?"

"At any cost, I shall punish the man," he said. "I had almost forgotten his existence. Fate sent here him to-night. I regret it, for one reason, but I rejoice for many."

The one reason, I fancied, was that the strain on his already weakening powers en-

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tailed by the subjugation of Steindal would demand a corresponding relaxation of the tension needed to preserve the woman he loved and the woman who loved him from relapsing into their lamentable excitations. I was right in this, as also in the surmise that the erstwhile purveyor of musical celebrities (Steindal was now a mining expert and a man of great wealth in share certificates) would prove a most stubborn subject before he yielded to the demands of telegnomic reciprocity.

It was to be a contest of Mind against Matter, of the Soul in man against the Brute in man. That is a primeval fight, a battle begun ere many of the hills were fashioned or the oceans charted as we know them; nor did I doubt the issue of its latest renewal. But what form would it take? Would Karl kill Steindal? If Steindal were the bull of sacrifice, would Karl supply the fire to consume him before our very eyes?

Haply, I had no opportunity for ordered thought. Events began to march, as they say on the Boul Mich, and, for a little time, I remained an outwardly quiet spectator of doings which soon set the restaurant in an uproar.

Steindal, who had drawn somewhat apart in earnest conversation with his friend from Capel Court, came back to us. He looked confidently



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enough at Karl. Evidently he was determined to brazen out a difficult situation.

"I feel a little *hors de concours* in these garments," he said, quite affably, speaking in the smooth, sibilant voice which reminded me of Karl's likening his utterance to that of a boa-constrictor.

"Ah, you speak French, too!" exclaimed Karl with a grim geniality. "The last time we met you indulged mostly in Spanish."

"The last time! We have never met before. I — er — think I have heard of you from a man named Constantine."

Certainly Steindal had splendid nerves. He arranged himself comfortably at the table. The chef of the Pall Mall Hotel had a great name for appetizing dishes, and Jules was hovering about with alert pencil and memoranda tablets.

"Yes. Poor Constantine! Killed himself, didn't he? Did you ever hear why?"

Karl, I noticed, had his hands clasped and resting on the table. The significance of this attitude dawned upon me then. He thus completed some magnetic circuit of intense potency.

"Never heard a word," said Steindal, who seemed to accept Karl's presence with greater complacency each moment. "That is to say, I knew he was worried about some girl. As if any woman were worth suicide! *Sango la Madonna!*"

## STEINDAL GIVES A PUBLIC PERFORMANCE

"That is more like the Steindal of old, though the appeal is to a strange patroness," cried Karl. "Oh, do not worry, Jules! Give us fish, flesh, and fowl, and bring the best wine of France. We leave details to you."

The head waiter whisked off. That sort of order is comprehensible. The diner surrenders at discretion, no matter what the charge.

"Your references to past acquaintance puzzle me," said the Jew, politely keeping to the thread of the conversation.

"Then I must be mistaken. Perhaps Constantine gave me a picture so vivid that it burnt itself into my memory."

"That is a popular attribute of the fiend, and hardly flattering to me," laughed the other.

"Well, there is some truth in it, and it may even contain a germ of adulation. Unless I err again, you played Mephisto to Constantine's Faust, eh?"

"Very likely. I knew many Margarets in those days."

I expected an explosion after that singularly apt, yet unfortunate, reply, but, beyond a slight contraction of the eyelids and twitching of the nostrils, Karl gave no sign. Steindal was so unctuously candid, so shielded by the armor of money and conceit, that I deemed him impenetrable by the hidden lightning with which Karl

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was enveloping him. I changed my opinion ere many minutes passed.

"Many Margarets," repeated Karl, musingly, "and many Fausts, but only one devil, Steindal."

"Do you think so? Then he exists in numerous forms. *Sapristi!* Here is another and familiar imp in a *sole diable*. And an '84 champagne! You can't get this wine in Paris."

Steindal had that insufferable habit of tucking a napkin under his chin. He began to eat. He swallowed two glasses of wine with surprising haste. Karl relapsed into silence. Hooper and I spoke of generalities. An orchestra was tuning up, and Karl whispered to a waiter. I saw that the conductor held a confabulation with the bassoon-player, and the band struck into an allegro movement which I did not recognize at once.

Suddenly Karl leaned forward. His eyes blazed with fire. Had the hotel clerk of former years been in the room he would have remembered that look.

"That is your cue, Mephisto," he said, his low-pitched voice vibrating with intense energy. "Up you get! On the chair! You know the words:

Dio dell' or del mondo, signor,  
Sei possente risplendente  
Culto hai tu maggior quaggiù.

That's it! Now!"

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And Steindal, skipping to his feet, mounted the chair with surprising agility, and began to sing, with a fine assumption of the basso profundo manner, the rollicking song with which Mephistopheles disturbed the village revels. What could be more amazing than the action, more appropriate than the air? It has been rendered in English:

Clear the way for the Calf of Gold!  
In his pomp and pride adore him;  
East or West, in heat or cold,  
Weak and strong must bow before him!  
Wise men do homage mute  
To the image of the brute. . . .

Steindal, posturing on the chair in absurd caricature of a Plançon or Edouard de Reszke, was fairly launched into the opening strofa before Hooper or I quite realized what was happening. Some ladies at neighboring tables shrank from us with alarm. People farther away rose and gazed at us wide-eyed. A sharp-witted genius, scenting some mischief, shouted "Bravo!" and the band, thinking an artistic joke was in train, kept up the accompaniment. Jules and an under-manager hurried towards us, but, seeing that the diners were, if anything, inclined to applaud, they resolved to defer their appeal for orderly behavior on Steindal's part until he

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made an end. He sang both verses admirably, the band helping in the chorus, and, with the final wild phrase:

*Tuo ministro è Belzebù,*

a perfect hurricane of encouraging cries and rattling of cutlery came from all sides.

Steindal bowed in the approved style, and descended from his rostrum. He was not disturbed in the least. Obviously, Karl held him in a state of complete aphanasia, and this magnate of a Rand which he had never seen had not the remotest notion that he was making a supreme ass of himself. Nor was it altogether patent that others took that severe view. Certainly, the stock-broker regarded him with a pained curiosity, but most of those present seemed to look upon the escapade as the light-hearted ebullience of a foreigner.

Our waiters brought some variety of meat, goodness knows what, and Steindal tackled it with keen zest, first sluicing his strained vocal cords with more wine. The orchestra swung off into a pleasing waltz. Hooper and I, though disconcerted by the covert attention our party attracted, were beginning to take an intelligent interest in the dinner when Karl called on his medium for another "turn."

"In your vanished youth, Steindal," he hissed,

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"you were a circus acrobat. Before you gorge too much give us a contortion or two!"

Instantly the unhappy Wilhelm sprang upright again. He grabbed his chair, set it apart from the table with a professional bang on the floor, and forthwith stood on his head and hands. His coat and the white napkin flapped down over his face, coins rattled from his pockets, and his obese figure looked exceedingly comical as he poised himself feet upwards and slowly turned, so that all might see and admire. After a pause, he bounced back to the floor, but only to grasp the chair in a new way and extend himself horizontally, resting on his hands.

This time there were no plaudits. Something approaching a panic reigned throughout the room. The song was deemed a pardonable extravagance, but these grotesque posturings savored of madness. Like everybody else, I was so taken up with Steindal's antics that I paid no heed to Karl, nor did my flurried thoughts credit him with creating the wave of fear and disgust which now converted popular tolerance into disapprobation.

Women shrieked; there was a rush of excited guests and perplexed waiters. Then somebody — probably the gentleman who cried "Bravo" a few minutes before — bawled:

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"Turn him out! He is either mad or drunk!"

Absolutely heedless of the commotion he was causing, Steindal finished his balancing, gave a little skip reminiscent of the ring, smiled blandly, and kissed his finger-tips. Then he squatted on the carpet, and endeavored to do that which was impossible for a man of his build by trying to cross his feet over his shoulders.

This was too much. Jules, aided by a couple of waiters, clutched Steindal and pulled him out of the knot. He became very angry, swore outlandishly, fought, kicked, squealed, and was hauled out by main force, while a man gathered up his scattered money.

"And now," said Karl, with an air of placid relief, "now that I have made that self-satisfied little wretch the laughing-stock of London, let us have some dinner."

So that was the explanation of the extraordinary scene! Karl had not forgotten Steindal's outspoken rage when the hapless Armenian created a similar disturbance in a New York restaurant. He divined that Steindal could only be scarified through his colossal vanity. "The laughing-stock of London!" — that would be a barbed shaft; its wound would never heal. When Steindal regained possession of his senses he would learn the disastrous truth. Even if he escaped prosecution for disorderly conduct, some

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kind friend would surely tell him how he sang, and balanced, and contorted! He would howl and writhe in impotent fury. There was no legal redress. None would credit him, nor would he dare take that course. He could only accuse Karl of exercising some terrible influence upon him, and, in that event, the laughter would be even more wide-spread, while his overbearing reputation, which stood him in good stead in financial circles, must be lost irretrievably.

The disordered diners were beginning to arrange themselves once more. The band, owing to the conductor's happy thought, broke into the magnificent trio, "O del Ciel," for those Italians can play you anything of Gounod's or Verdi's right off the reel, and a great many persons smiled broadly as they caught the musical satire.

The stock-broker hurried out.

"He has gone to look after his friend. It is a kindly act," I said.

"Guess he has gone to glue himself on to the Paris telephone," commented Hooper, dryly. "Steindal's stocks are mainly held in France. Let it once get round that he is cracked, and they will drop into the place beneath like the gentle dew from heaven."

Hooper's perversion of Shakespeare was condoned by his knowledge of human nature. The telephone girl told me afterwards that the broker



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paid a fabulous sum for half an hour's talk with Paris that night.

"What will happen to Steindal, do you think?" I asked Karl.

"He is gradually recovering. In less than an hour he will be all right. I expect the hotel people, knowing his identity, will put him to bed and send for a doctor. But he wants no doctor. He will clamor for a purveyor of guns and daggers."

"You believe he will plan vengeance against you?"

"Most decidedly. He is no coward. His mother was a Mexican dancer. She taught him to throw a knife before he learnt the alphabet. Ask him the meaning of *la cuchillada* and you will see his eyes glisten."

Here was a nice outcome of a freak worthy of some light-headed schoolboy with a taste for practical joking. In addition to his other troubles, Karl had saddled himself with a mortal feud.

"Oh," I cried in a sudden heat, "this is intolerable. What a counselor your father brought from Heidelberg when he summoned me!"

"Have no fear," said Karl, toying with a salad; "Steindal cannot injure me. The little beast! I could paralyze his uplifted hand."

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Karl could do that, I knew. Nevertheless, I was a prey to disquieting thoughts.

Hooper, blessed with a temperament which could take an equable view of the Day of Judgment, began to review events in his practical way.

"I can credit you with accomplishing almost anything in the present tense, Karl," he said; "but I am taken out of my stride when you dip into history. How did you know Steindal had been a circus acrobat?"

"*You* knew."

"Yes. Some one told me years ago. I thought of it while he was singing, but I have never mentioned it to you."

Karl smiled wearily.

"That was enough," he said.

"My dear fellow, can you read my thoughts?"

"A little while ago I read the thoughts of every living being in this room. And what is more, I supplied the thoughts of most of them. Now, I would like to forget Steindal. Why did you fail to let me know you were in Paris?"

"I have a notion that any giving of information on my part would be kind of superfluous," laughed Hooper.

"You are mistaken. Here you are at my mercy; in Paris you are safe. The world holds nearly two thousand millions of people.

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Except under special circumstances, I cannot pretend to single out individuals."

I listened to their talk with little real comprehension. I was wondering what would be the outcome of the scene I had just witnessed. I seemed to be sitting in some theater, watching a drama of intense interest, with its thrills of pathos and human agony, and its snatches of comic relief. While the clown was setting the audience in a roar with his unconscious buffoonery the sad-hearted heroine was waiting in the wings to harrow us in the next breath.

And was it so in sober earnest? Was Maggie Hutchinson waiting, in her far-off Round Castle on the shores of Como, fully aware of the farce being enacted in the restaurant, and ready to take her cue when the moment arrived for her tribulation? How could I be sure? Was it possible to be certain of anything when all the common laws of nature were being turned topsy-turvy by a youngster whose weird powers were as yet but vaguely acknowledged by those few doubting believers acquainted with them?

I have often looked back on that extraordinary dinner in the Pall Mall Hotel. I know now that a great deal was revealed to me in that hour, but I was so overcome by the exciting outward aspects of the manifestations that

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I missed the inward message they carried. I am not alone in this crass blindness to hidden truth. When Gounod wrote the opera which gave Karl the text for Steindal's undoing, Mr. Gye, the then chief operatic manager of London, saw nothing in it but "a waltz and a chorus of old men." Paris would not have it. The Théâtre Lyrique produced it with financial loss. And one man, Choudens, thought he was taking a tremendous risk when he purchased the publishing rights for £400. Happy Choudens! He cleared nearly £120,000 by the venture.

Yet *Faust* was as great in 1839 as it is to-day. Only man has become enlightened.

I was brought to see things clearly in much less than half a century. But it saddens me to know how much I missed while Steindal was singing his devil's song and gyrating on his head and hands!

## CHAPTER XXI

### HOOPER SUGGESTS A WAY OUT

THOUGH Steindal was gone, we remained the center of observation. Perhaps others wondered, like Scapin, what the deuce he was doing in our boat. Karl, who was distinctly fatigued, did that which I had never seen him do before — he drank some wine. He seemed to be willing enough to talk freely, but held in leash by the presence of so many strangers. Hooper, I knew, was consumed with impatience, but he preserved the outward demeanor of a North American Indian. So there was a common agreement when I suggested that my sitting-room was the right place in which to smoke. Once there, Hooper threw aside the mask.

"I have the accumulated questions of five years to fire at you. Are you ready?" he said to Karl.

"Quite ready. I would only ask you to remember that a Hindu ascetic once devoted thirty years to the consideration of one great question: 'Whence?' and when he emerged from retirement he astonished his disciples by merely propounding another: 'Whither?'"

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"I go one better by putting both. Whence comes this amazing sense of yours, and whither does it tend?"

"If it amuses you to hear my guesses on those points, I am not disinclined to bring them into the light. Have either of you heard of Paul Flechsig's 'organs of thought' theory? Yes? Well, he holds, as you know, that in the gray bed of the brain there are four inner spheres of sensation - the sphere of touch in the vertical lobe, the sphere of sight in the occipital lobe, the sphere of smell in the frontal lobe, and the sphere of hearing in the temporal lobe. These are the sense-centers. Between, and in active communication with them, lie the four great thought-centers, containing an elaborate and peculiar nerve-structure. Take away the enveloping tissues and bones, and you have a wonderfully complex instrument, balanced, so to speak, on the spinal cord. This, in the descent of man, is not the outcome of, but an essential preliminary to, the brain. I imagine that a comparative anatomist would assign far more importance to the spinal cord than, let us say, a philosopher would give it. Be that as it may, I am quite certain, in my case, that the spine possesses magnetic polarity to an extraordinary degree. Without going into an extensive lecture on the subject, I

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believe that I have answered your first question. The second bristles with difficulties. I can only tell you that I affect others, who have the same latent attributes, by the exercise of the principle roughly known to science as magnetic induction. Notwithstanding the curious things you have seen, my powers are strictly limited. At a given moment I can induce varying sensations in different subjects, and these sensations, carried to the thought-centers, set in motion the sense-centers. If such faculties were common to all, life would be more simple, and, perhaps, less mechanical."

"That is an extraordinary conclusion," I broke in.

"It sounds contradictory, but I think analysis of my meaning will bear me out. Come now, Hooper, I look to you for support. I recall your famous thesis that man contains within himself all the possibilities of invention. Man required the power to communicate speedily with his fellows. After long ages, he has evolved the electric telegraph and the telephone. I reach the same end without the cumbrous means. Certain people would dub my sixth sense supernatural, or transcendental, meaning thereby something which can exist and operate without a material basis. That is ridiculous. If such well-known beverages as

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tea and coffee can stimulate thought, if alcohol can intensify feeling, if musk can reanimate the fainting consciousness and ether deaden it, is it not clear that the ordinary senses have an anatomical basis yielding to chemical action? My sixth sense is a true natural phenomenon, and, when I come to be dissected in the interests of science, you must ask the anatomist to explain —"

There was a sound at the door as of one fumbling at the handle.

I rose, surprised that any one should seek to enter without knocking. Then the door opened, and Steindal appeared. I learned afterwards that he had recovered very rapidly from his seeming madness, and had persuaded the hotel attendants to leave him alone, on the plea that he would sleep. A doctor, too, summoned hastily, bore out his statement that he was in a normal condition of health. By tipping a housemaid, who knew nothing of the scene in the restaurant, he reached my room.

So far as I could judge, he was unarmed. Nevertheless, I barred the way, but he paid no heed to me. He dodged, in order to see Karl.

"I want to speak to you," he said thickly, addressing Karl.

"Come in, then," was the answer.

Thinking that three of us could surely over-



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power him at once if he attempted violence, I stood aside.

Seen in the half light of the corridor, Steindal looked his own tubby, commonplace self, but the bright interior of the room revealed the rough usage to which he had been subjected. His chin was scratched, his collar and shirt loosened by the breaking of a stud, the breast-pocket of his coat was torn, and his long, black, smooth hair ruffled.

The expression of his face offered a study in physiology. The corners of his thick, salacious lips turned upward with the scowl of an enraged animal. His eyes, usually black and beady, were now dark red, and darting shifting glances at all parts of Karl's body. Their constant movement was fascinating. If you have ever seen a bull-fight, and watched the last stand of the Andalusian monarch of the herd as he faces the matador, well aware that the bright straight blade in the man's right hand is ready to seek his heart's blood, yet compelled to watch the flutterings of a bit of red silk on the *muleta* in his predestined slayer's left hand, you will form some notion of the suppressed fury which gleamed from Steindal's quickly-moving eyes.

Yet his voice, though it had lost its smoothness, was well under control.

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"Whatever else you may be, I don't suppose you are a coward," said he.

I believe, to this day, that Steindal could actually smell blood in that instant. His nostrils twitched slightly, and his tongue darted forth to salivate his lips. Hooper and I might have been non-existent for all the heed he paid to us.

"No, I am not," said Karl.

"Then you will travel with me to France tomorrow?"

"That would be useless, Steindal. I can paralyze your arm, root you immovable to the ground."

"Ah, but that would make you, indeed, a coward. Yet, I take the chance. I will fight you with my hands tied, if need be. My teeth will serve."

"I cannot fight you," said Karl, slowly. "I refuse to murder you, and certainly I shall not let you murder me. No, Steindal, you must live. I am sorry to be so hard on you, but you really must continue to exist."

"Is that your final answer?"

"Absolutely."

"Do you assign a cause?"

"For you, punishment, and, it may be, retribution, to be followed perhaps by the emergence of a soul from your bloated body."

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For me, suffering too, in a form you cannot understand."

"I decline your terms," murmured Steindal, moistening his lips again and advancing a pace.

"Go!" said Karl, sternly, and, to my utter surprise, the other man turned and quitted the room. We heard him walk steadily down the corridor, and caught the click of his boots as he stepped on to a marble staircase. It was Hooper who broke the queer silence which fell on us.

"You seem to have taken the measure of Steindal's backbone, at any rate?" he commented.

"Where I am concerned, he is no longer a free agent," said Karl, wearily.

"Tell me," I interposed, "why you deal so harshly with a man you have never actually met before to-night?"

"Because I loathe such a creature. He represents the pig in man. He has brought horror and abasement to hundreds. Now he must wallow in the only degradation that makes him contemptible in his own esteem. But forgive me if I leave you. You and Hooper can find much to discuss, and I must be alone."

He stood upright, and drew a hand across his eyes. I seemed to perceive a slackening of the muscles of his finely molded frame which was

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almost a symptom of complete enervation. It was a new and unaccountable alarm which impelled me to say:

"Will you go home, Karl, and promise me to try and sleep?"

"I am going home," he replied. "Good night!"

Clearly, he did not desire any courteous leave-taking in the vestibule. I did not offer to accompany him. When I knew that he had descended the stairs — thus avoiding the elevator and its possible publicity — I rejoined Hooper.

He was smoking, and his gaze was fixed on the ceiling. I was in no mood for talk just then. More by force of habit than otherwise, I rang for a waiter and ordered whisky and soda. The mere presence of the man, with his servile affability and his laden tray, was a tonic in itself. He brought me back from illimitable depths to the workaday world.

"Do you partake?" I asked Hooper.

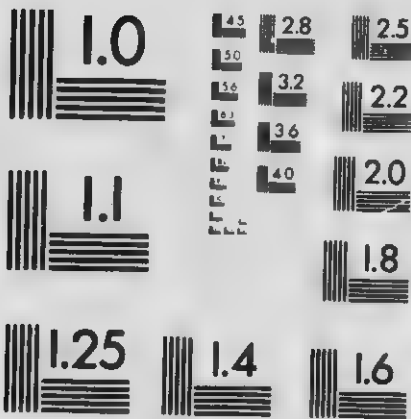
"Yep."

The cigar wedged between his teeth rendered the final labial the easier manner of speech. I found his presence soothing, too. I poured out a small quantity of spirit, and, while the waiter was uncorking a bottle of soda water, I looked out of the window. It was a glorious summer evening when last I saw the streets. Now the



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flaring lights were reflected in wavering zigzags on road and pavements, while the shining capes of 'bus-drivers and cabmen caught the eye as moving pyramids.

"Good heavens!" I cried, "it is raining!"

There was a loud report. The attendant had drenched himself.

"I beg your pardon, sir," he stammered, "but you did make me jump, an' no mistake."

"Better have the remainder of the soda poured over your head," snapped Hooper at me.

"But I tell you it is raining," I shouted excitedly.

"Give it to me, waiter, if you are afraid," said Hooper, firmly.

"Oh, I had forgotten you did not know that Karl has to exert many times the force in unsettled weather that he requires when the sky is clear. Hooper, he may not live days, let alone weeks."

I quailed before the American's warning glance, and ceased speaking. The waiter was glad to close the door on us, I am sure. Hooper led me to a chair.

"Sit down, partner," he said. "I have been trying to theorize. A certain Greek gentleman named Empedocles, dated 500 B.C., believed that he had solved the puzzle of life when he defined the love and hatred of the elements. I think we

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have reached his track. But you know the kind of elements we have to deal with, and I do not. Discourse to me of Karl, and Maggie, and — is there another woman?"

"There is," I said.

"Bully for me!" he cried delightedly. "The eternal feminine would have the shortest life on record if there weren't two of 'em. Now, let's have the whole yarn. I am a good listener."

So I told him everything, fact and fancy, until my voice gave out, and we were amazed to find I had been talking for nearly three hours. It was long past midnight when I noticed the clock.

"Let us to bed," I wheezed. "We must consult in the morning."

He, in his turn, looked out at the weather.

"It has ceased raining and the stars are visible," he said.

"Thank goodness for that! Karl will experience some relief."

"I think not. If he and the rest of us are not qualifying for an asylum by believing the truth of what you have told me, don't you see that the strain is cumulative? He cannot, I may almost say he dare not, sleep. He is deliberately sacrificing himself to save those women. He thinks, and we agree with him, that his death will snap the tension. They will grieve over his loss, no doubt, but their tears will be a measure of salva-



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tion. I tell you, my friend, we are up against a hard proposition. Were it not utterly selfish, I could almost wish you had left me in Paris."

"I was tempted to share the responsibility with some one whom I could trust."

"Yes, I see that. And don't think I would shirk my duty to a comrade like Karl. Yet, I fear for him. Something must be done, and done quickly, if we would rescue him. Oh, if only I knew more of science and less of law! What is the meaning of this resistance we hear so much of? Is it the same thing in Steindal and Nora Cazenove? It seems to stir up ignoble passion in both, though the manner of it is so different to our perception. And that is strange, unless the question of sex enters largely into it."

"Affinity and repulsion are the two fundamental principles of all creation. I have heard you say, years ago, that Karl threw us back to first causes."

"We are dealing now with men and women of to-day," he cried, pacing up and down the room.

I had never before seen him so genuinely disturbed. His artificial coolness had melted, as ice might fall off a volcano in eruption after long quiescence. I had great respect for the clearness of his mental vision; there was also a certain consolation in witnessing this sudden upheaval. That a skilled lawyer, a man of great acumen in

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affairs, and, for one of his years, an astonishingly cool-headed judge of human nature, should be so perturbed by the issues submitted to him, offered some proof that I had not magnified their gravity.

"Do you think we can regard Steindal as a negligible quantity?" he asked, halting in front of me and piercing me with his large earnest eyes.

"It would seem to be reasonable from his latest attitude," I admitted.

"Then we are driven back on the women. What of this girl, Nora? She is the chief difficulty. It is perfectly evident that the sympathetic bond, or whatever it is, which exists between Karl and Maggie, was broken, or remained in abeyance, from the day of Constantine's death until there sprang up some lover-like relationship between Karl and Nora. Then Maggie intervened, whether by her own volition or not is unknown, and, to an extent, inconsequent. Karl recognized the impossibility of marriage with Nora, but it was beyond him to give a reason that would be accepted by his father, nor was he so callous as to offer up Maggie as a holocaust. Therefore, he has definitely adopted a course of action which demands his own death. There is no other alternative. Either Maggie or he must die. The way out — if there is one — lies with Nora — or Maggie."

"But what can we do? We cannot kill of them, even for the sake of our friend."

"No, but we can bring them together before it is too late."

"What good purpose will that accomplish?"

"It may achieve a hundred different purposes which are impracticable when one woman is in Italy and the other woman in England. Let me get them face to face and things will happen. Sit right down and write me a letter of introduction to Nora. Just say I am a friend of both parties, and leave the remainder of the explanation to me. I will take care of her, and of Maggie too, not to mention Steindal, until you bring Maggie from the Castello Rondo."

"Until I — bring —"

"Repetition is the vainest form of argument. Don't speak, there's a good fellow. Indeed, I can't. When all this trouble is through, I will advise you to consult a specialist. Weakness of the vocal chords is an early symptom of deafness. Now write, while I look up the train service."

I compared Hooper to a volcano; I might have gone further and say that the lava-stream of his impetuosity quite swept me off my feet. It was a splendid thing, in a crisis, to have a master ally. His confidence lent me new life. I rushed off to make inquiries beneath, and I sat down to write a note to Nora. In black

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white the task was not so easy as Hooper would have it.

Ultimately, I wrote as follows:

"It would not be just to you or to Karl were I to conceal my firm conviction that you both are faced with a most serious problem. Certain events which took place in this hotel to-night, combined with my own observations of Karl's health, force me to tell you that the ensuing week may see the gravest developments, so far as he is concerned. In my opinion, I can best help him by taking a journey to Italy, without losing an unnecessary hour. I want you also to help, and I am sending you this letter by the hands of one who is a friend of Karl's, anxious to be of service to you, and thoroughly acquainted with the present critical condition of affairs. Trust him, as I hope you will trust me, to act for the common good."

I read through what I had written, not once, but half a dozen times. Letters to excitable young ladies are dangerous as the boomerang in the hands of a novice. If the worst came to the worst, and Karl died, who could tell what hubbub might be raised by Nora Cazenove? At any rate, it was quite inadvisable to allude more specifically to the uncanny workings of a sixth sense.

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"Telegnomy and a coroner's jury do not run in tandem," said Hooper, taking my view of the need there was to use guarded phrases.

He also approved of the reference to Italy.

"She has jumped Maggie's claim and she knows it. It may be my regrettable duty to make that clear right away," he remarked.

"Do not blame the girl," I said. "Remember that the match was made by Mr. Grier and Lord Sandilands."

"I guess that didn't worry Nora. But your best train leaves at nine in the morning, and you have a voice like a crow. If you don't give it a rest you will not be able to ask for your ticket. Leave Nora to me, there's a good chap. I'll fix her."

I had seen Nora ablaze with the fire of the gods, so I doubted the effect of Hooper's coercion or persuasiveness. Yet he had brought action where there was uncertainty, substituted ordered effort for chaos, and I was grateful to him.

Hence, I slept and breakfasted, and caught the first morning express for the Continent.

## CHAPTER XXII

### NORA FACES THE INEVITABLE

I AM inclined to believe that each one of my fair readers, and a majority of those mere males of less account, would gladly accompany me in my journey south by east across the map of Europe. I say this, not by reason of overweening pride in my personal charm as a *compagnon de voyage*, but because of the journey's objective. At the present stage of my story, Maggie Hutchinson is surely an interesting personage. Have you ever heard or read of another heroine so situated? Mark you, she knew Karl when she was a little child. After ten years' separation she met him, under very peculiar conditions, for a few hours in a London hotel. And now, five years later, without ever a word exchanged between them during all that long time, her life was indissolubly bound up with his, a passionate love united her to him with ties never dreamed of by tender Juliet or devoted Héloïse, and to crown the midsummer madness of it all, Karl was deliberately killing himself to save another woman's life.

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It is a pardonable assumption, therefore, that every true devotee of romance should be eager to meet her face to face. I know that I was. I quitted Charing Cross in a state of nervous exaltation to which any seasoned heart had long been a stranger.

But Fate, the master playwright, had ordained that influences I had not foreseen should fill the stage for many an hour ere I reached the Castello Rondo in far-off Italy. In fact, none of us had taken into account Karl's mother.

Mrs. Grier was not enamored of high society as it is understood in London. She was a German, and she had never lost her Teuton's tastes. First, and necessarily, a good housekeeper, she gave her spare time to reading. She hardly ever glanced at a newspaper, nor did she dawdle through more than one novel a year. She kept her household accounts, contrived economies in an annual expenditure of many thousands, looked after the practical management of certain estates, and, for the rest, saw as little as possible of fashionable folk, but isolated herself with some portentous professorial treatise on the more serious matters of life, or sought relaxation in the pages of her beloved Schiller.

This was excellent while Grier senior was

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accumulating riches, and Karl followed the beaten track leading to a suitable marriage and a pecuniary. But she had lost none of her maternal love for her wonderful son, and her shrewd eyes soon divined the anxiety of her husband, the silent endurance of Karl. At first, her questions encountered a certain gentle evasiveness. She persisted, and the elder Grier admitted that all was not well between Karl and Nora.

Then the mother entered the arena, and you need never ask in whose behalf she drew the sword.

"If Karl does not want to marry Nora Cazenove, why are you trying to force him into a distasteful match?" she demanded of her distressed partner.

"I am doing nothing of the kind," was the instant answer.

"Then who *is* doing it?"

"No one. He seemed to be happy in his engagement. All went well until this inf — this dreadful sixth sense of his seized upon him, threatening to wring the very soul out of him."

"I believe he has always hankered after Maggie Hutchinson."

"How can that be? We have not coerced his judgment. He has not made the slightest



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effort to meet her for years. I am not prone to superstition, but there are times when I imagine that the watch Constantine gave him is an evil thing, a constant reminder of the man's unhappy death."

To what a depth of misery must my old friend have been reduced before he would seek such an ignoble explanation of his sorrows!

"Unberufen! Unberufen!" cried Mrs. Grier, for she was born in the Black Forest, and the scientific essay was not yet written which should rescue her wholly from belief in cryptic omens of malign import.

On the morning of my departure for Como, Karl did not appear at breakfast. His mother went to him. She found him in his dressing-room, smoking in seeming content.

"Now, Karl," she said, sitting on an arm of his easy chair and placing a loving hand on his shoulder, "tell me all about it."

He was far too wise to pretend to misunderstand.

"There is not much to tell, mother," he said placidly. "I find that I cannot marry Nora, and, in view of the wide-spread interest taken in our engagement, that is a sad thing, is it not?"

"What is stopping you from marrying her?"

"Some intangible influence which you women call love. It is an affinity whose properties

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are shared by all creation, from unicellular protozoa up or down, to the highest anthropoids. Even air and water are composed of sympathetic gases, so —"

"Karl, be serious."

"Mother, I *am* serious. Paris was drawn to Helen by a living force which leaped the strongest walls of reason and morality, and the same impetuous movement unites two atoms of hydrogen to one atom of oxygen in order to form water. Now, wait a moment! Introduce a Menelaus or an atom of nitrogen, and you have an explosion."

"You are fencing with me, *liebchen*."

"Indeed, I am not."

"Then, if Margaret Hutchinson is your Helen, and there is no Menelaus, you must tell Nora Cazenove that it would not be fair to her to take her as your wife when you love another."

"Do you think that is the best thing to do?"

"I am so sure of it that if you dislike the task I will go to her myself."

Karl saw that his mother meant what she said. Heavy-hearted by the necessity of it, he set himself deliberately to deceive her.

"There is no harm in waiting a few days," he said.

"There is every harm. Your father is quite

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beside himself with care. I have never seen him so disturbed."

Karl bit his pipe firmly between his teeth. His father had kept the secret, then? His mother did not know all.

"I have a reason for saying that," he continued, after a slight pause. "However faithfully I may have worshiped Maggie from afar there is no knowing how she regards me."

"But you *do* know."

"Not in the accepted meaning of the term. I may be blinded by my own conceit. To settle matters, an old friend has gone to Como to see how my inamorata regards me."

"An old friend! Who is it that is so interested in my son?"

He knew that his mother's heart rebelled against the suggestion of a stranger taking part in affairs so vital to himself of which she had been kept in ignorance.

With a well-assumed carelessness, he told her how Hooper and I were planning to expedite his wooing, and he so insisted on the humor of our dark conspiracy, when he was fully aware of each act and word, that he won a smile to her kindly face.

Yet her alarmed perplexity did not abate. There was a subtle change in Karl which in no way escaped her. He was thinner, altogether

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unstrung and devitalized. She was conscious, too, of a physical tension in his attitude which was strangely at variance with the wonted suppleness of an athletic youngster of his fine proportions.

"When does this embassy return?" she asked musingly.

"I cannot say. You forget that I have not been consulted," he grumbled with a well-feigned laugh.

"And Mr. Hooper remains in London?"

"That is a part of the plot."

"Very well. Be ready to take me to the hotel in half an hour. There is a flower-show at Richmond which I wish to visit. We shall call for Mr. Hooper, drive to Richmond, pass some time at the show, and return here for tea."

In a word, Karl was to be tied to his mother's apron-strings for a while. And Hooper was to be drawn judiciously. It was a simple expedient; for Mrs. Grier had failed utterly to recognize the real nature of the problem which faced her, and not her alone, but all of us. Her son's sixth sense had always remained a thing apart and wholly incomprehensible. She had heard little of it during recent years. The pranks he used to play occasionally served but to amuse her. Thus, he could summon any servant in the house by causing that particular domestic

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to fancy he or she heard a bell or a voice. He was exceedingly reliable as a weather prophet, especially when the conditions were settled for either rain or sunshine. Once, when a guest, a *malade imaginaire*, was bothering Mrs. Grier and her cook by the multiplicity of dishes he could not eat and the few he could eat but which disagreed with him, Karl made him tackle an outrageous meal of many courses with a hearty gusto. The poor man's famished digestion stood the ordeal well, and he slept for twelve hours thereafter, to the great joy of the household and his own confusion.

I might multiply hundreds of these minor happenings, and it is not surprising that Mrs. Grier came to regard them as of slight importance, whereas the existing grave situation was not only of recent growth, but its nature and extent had been sedulously kept from her. So, there never was less tangible connection between trivial cause and actual effect than between the mother's resolve to keep an eye on her son for a day or two and the outcome of that resolution.

Examining events in critical review afterwards, I saw that a host of things which might have occurred were diverted from their obvious channels by Mrs. Grier's interference at that moment. Some of these became clear before many hours had sped.

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First and foremost of these baffled circumstances — Hooper's acquaintance with Miss Cazenove was delayed a whole day. Secondly — but here I avail myself of the only chance given me in the course of a singularly straightforward tale to whet the reader's appetite somewhat by refusing to raise the curtain on the last act of the drama before the penultimate scene has been packed away with the other stage accessories.

And, indeed, I am concealing nothing from you in the ordered narration of the story. Mrs. Grier kept the two young men busy all the day, and insisted on Hooper remaining to dinner that evening. She learnt not a word which cleared the puzzle. Hooper and Karl were chiefly reminiscent in their talk. The shrewd American quickly took the cue of his friend's attitude. Neither by look nor speech did he betray the trust reposed in him.

Mrs. Grier twice swung the conversation round to the occupants of the Castello Rondo. She did this neatly and without undue insistence, and quite as cleverly did Hooper express his desire to meet such an exceptionally gifted girl as Maggie Hutchinson was, by all accounts.

Dear lady! She remained awake that night until assured that Karl was safe and sound in his room. She was bewildered, but far from

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alarmed. Yet she knelt and prayed long and earnestly for the welfare of her loved ones, husband and son, and her last conscious words, uttered with trembling lips ere she closed her tear-laden eyes, were: —

“Karl, mein liebchen, Gott befohlen!”

Little did she dream that she owed her restful sleep to the influence which Karl exerted in her behalf, nor has she ever known the terrible strain she imposed by her well-meant efforts to pierce the mystery which surrounded him. That was mercifully kept from her. Had she ever realized that the long-drawn-out programme she devised in order to distract his mind was really the quickest means to bring him to utter destruction, she would never have forgiven herself.

Hooper was on the rack all the time. The signs which an anxious mother interpreted as lassitude and a weariness of spirit were clear evidence to him that Karl was suffering an agony of restraint.

“I was at my wits’ end what to say or do,” he told me subsequently. “I was afraid that Karl might crack up at any moment. Brain fever was the best thing I could hope for him; but, somehow, though doctoring is a science I know less of than conchology, I felt that relief would not come in that way. Once or twice I managed to touch his hand as if by accident.

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He was cool and firm as a block of ice. He knew what I was up to, and smiled at me in such despair! Guess I had a cold chill down my spine enough to give a rhinoceros influenza!"

Strange, was it not, that Hooper should use such a simile after what Karl had said? But I must guard against digression. There is a fitting place for analysis, but a man may not stand up in a canoe and make a speech on the laws of bodies in motion when his frail craft is hurtling through rock-strewn rapids.

"It was a heavy risk I took," went on my fellow-conspirator, "but I was sure that Karl was more taxed by his mother's close observation than by the manifold demands on his stamina entailed by other considerations. So I bluffed. Oxford was a natural goal. I suggested that he and I should visit our old 'Varsity next day, and Mrs. Grier approved of the idea. That is how I managed to install him in our sitting-room at the hotel early on the following morning. There he was at peace."

Karl showed a great desire, at the time, to discuss his sixth sense fully and freely, with one who might be trusted to listen without scepticism. He acquainted Hooper with many marvels which reached my ears in due course. And, happily, the freedom from restraint had the good effect of inducing a slight drowsiness. He would



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not admit it, but Hooper was quite convinced that he had not slept during the preceding four days at least.

That afternoon he yielded sufficiently to the demands of outraged nature to sink into a heavy sleep, though we found, on inquiry — not from him but from those whose well-being he was protecting at his own irreparable loss — that his control over them never slackened for an instant.

Thinking that the best thing possible had happened, Hooper calmly locked him in, and told the floor attendant to ask Mr. Grier to await his (Hooper's) return if he woke up and rang.

Then, fast as a hansom could carry him, he hurried to Sandilands House, there to learn that the Honorable Nora Cazenove had driven to the Griers', with laudable intent to take Mrs. Grier and Karl to Hurlingham.

The pen almost refuses to write these colorless annals of ordinary life in town when they are contrasted with the extraordinary incidents to which they directly contributed. Yet they are essential to my story as plain brick and mortar to some noble edifice which inspired the muse of many generations of poets.

Hooper ascertained that Miss Cazenove would return home about half-past six, to dress for dinner and the opera. None but an American

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could have extracted this information from a severe London footman. There is a charming affability, a dramatic good-fellowship, about our transatlantic cousins which ignores the traditional reserve of England.

Racing back to the hotel, Hooper found Karl still asleep. At 6.35 p.m. he coolly telephoned to Miss Nora, and quite as coolly read her my letter of introduction over the wire.

"I guess I shook her up good an' hard," he said to me, in the exchange of further confidences, and I quite believe it.

He pressed inflexibly for an immediate interview. At all hazards, now, he was determined to make known to her the dangerous atmosphere in which her fiancée was existing.

"Her voice was a bit scared as she discussed things," he declared, "but, after chewing on it for a minute or two, she asked me to meet her at the opera at eight o'clock sharp. The lady who would chaperon her, and some other friends, would not be there until nearly nine. She would go in advance, leaving a message for her chaperon, and we could talk undisturbed. I allow I rather cottoned to a girl who could fix things as slick as that."

Karl was seemingly sunk in the sleep of sheer weakness. Hooper counted on meeting Nora and returning to the hotel in time to arouse

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Karl for a late meal, and then see him safely home, or even detain him for the night after explaining matters to his father and mother.

Indeed, things were going so well that he was buoyed up with a new hope. He dressed rapidly, reached Covent Garden, and saw a lady whom he took to be Nora Cazenove descend from a brougham, cross the vestibule while darting an interrogatory glance at its denizens, and hasten up the stairs.

He was right. An attendant took his card, the lady halted smilingly, and Hooper made himself known.

A well-bred, bright-eyed, alert young American is seldom at a discount under such conditions. The spice of the unusual procedure, flavored by a certain curiosity, led Nora to receive him graciously, if with a not unnatural shyness arising from the innuendoes of my letter and Hooper's own persistence in seeking the meeting.

He lost no time in tackling the subject for which she had accorded the rendezvous. Once they were seated in the box, and the strains of the orchestra (how remarkably was music interwoven with the vital events of Karl's career!) made it impossible for his voice to carry through the thin partitions on each side, Hooper plunged into a clear, decisive, and, to

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any ears save those of a woman in love, convincing history of Karl's sixth sense and its latest astounding developments.

Though she protested vehemently, and threatened (though probably not quite in earnest in this) to leave the theater, Hooper spared her no shred of the evidence which proved that Karl was killing himself on her account.

Never did a nice young man carry out an harder self-imposed ordeal with a nice young woman than Hooper that evening in his impassioned plea to Nora Cazenove for his friend's life.

"I never let up on her for an instant," he said in his own picturesque way. "We had a heart-to-heart talk. The storming of San Juan Hill was child's play to the way in which I hurled my battalions of fact against her entrenchments of romance. When I pictured Karl's impending collapse, the inconsolable despair of his parents, her own unending self-reproach, and even the broken-hearted sorrow of her successful rival, I got her to the point of yielding. I pitied her for her suffering, but I promised her the reward of the consciousness of having acted nobly. She, and Karl, and Maggie, were the victims of circumstances. They could no more help what had happened than moths driven out to sea by a summer

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hurricane. One of them must let go for the good of all. If she renounced Karl voluntarily, there was a chance, and perhaps only a remote chance, that a tragedy might be averted. I could not guarantee that. But it was the one way out, in your judgment and mine, while her marriage with Karl was simply not to be thought of, because he would be dead within a week."

Think of this strenuous advocate piling Pelion upon Ossa to scale the fortress of a woman's fierce love, asking her to believe the incredible, to sacrifice herself, not only for the sake of the man she worshiped, but to secure the happiness of another woman! And yet, he nearly won. Of that he was certain.

He kept until the last the fact that Karl was even then lying in the hotel, weary almost unto dissolution, utterly spent by the struggle which he had waged in her behalf. It seemed to him that the intensity of his convictions had borne down the barrier Karl himself had erected in Nora's heart and brain. She was on the point of yielding. The words trembled on her lips which would set Karl free, but the dénouement came in a fashion which neither of them expected.

Hitherto she had been greatly distressed, yet the exigencies of the time and place re-

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strained her protests to the spoken word, the flashing eye, the tremulous lip.

Suddenly she rose to her feet and staggered back into the dark interior of the box. Had not Hooper caught her in his arms she would have fallen.

"Oh, take me home, take me home!" she wailed. "For pity's sake, do not leave me! Karl is dead!"

## CHAPTER XXIII

### "A STRUGGLE 'TWINX LOVE AND DEATH"

AND now you shall hie with me to Italy. I had missed the over-night Engadine Rapide to Lucerne, and Hooper's enthusiasm sent me to Dover two hours too early. As it happens, I take a lasting delight in getting the better of the terrible line between London and the channel, which any man may do by catching a fast train slightly in advance of the boat express and carrying his grip from the town station to the pier. He thus avoids the scandalous overcharge of the boat trains, and lays the unction to his soul that he is not a holder of "Doras."

All day long I was looking at scenes familiar to my eyes. Lille, Douai, St. Quentin, Laon — how the old cities of French Flanders and Picardy brought the ghosts of past years trooping before me. Then, as night fell, began that interminable running into and out of frontier stations on rails laid in crescents, so that you are seldom certain where the engine is and it is hard to persuade your nervous fellow passenger, who has never taken the journey before, that he or she is not in the wrong train.

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Thus, accompanied by the babel of funny noises inseparable from French railways, I dozed through a rumbling journey and reached Basle in the early morning. It will perhaps scarce be credited (seeing that I have posed, and justly, as an experienced *voyageur*) that I quitted London without ascertaining the exact locality of the Castello Rondo. At Lucerne I purchased a guide-book to the Italian Lakes, virgin territory to me, notwithstanding all my jaunts in strange lands. I discovered, to my dismay, that the shores of Lake Como cover nearly a hundred miles, while towns cluster round its "efflorescent loveliness" in a fine profusion. Bellagio, Cadenabbia and Como I had heard of, but who was to distinguish Domaso from Dongo, or Colico from Crema?

To add to my annoyance, the writer of the guide-book spread himself on the fact that each jutting peninsula or verdant slope held "castles with turreted towers, peeping out, ever and anon, from the sylvan woods which hide them." Cheerfully could I have wrung his neck for that sentence. It tortured me until the slow Italian train deposited me at Como at eleven o'clock, which, allowing for mid-Europe time, was slightly in advance of the hour Frank Hooper called at Sandilands House.

You will remember that Nora had gone out,



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meaning to drive Mrs. Grier and Karl to Hurlingham. Karl, of course, was then asleep in the Pall Mall Hotel, so the two ladies went together, and a fine fencing-match they indulged in, without a doubt. But they, at least, used words which they understood, even if they tried to cloak their meaning, while I used a language which I did not understand in striving to wrest from several voluble Italians the whereabouts of the Castello Rondo and the Signora Hutchinson. One brigandish person reeled off fourteen likely places, so I quitted the terminus in wrath, found the English-speaking proprietor of a hotel, and luckily ascertained from him that the lady and mansion I was in search of would surely be in the neighborhood of Bellagio.

I believed him, and took a steamer for a two hours' journey on the lake. When I saw the superb panorama opening up in front, when the Villa d'Este spread its wondrous array of terraces, temples, waterfalls, gardens, and fountains before my astonished eyes, I forgave the guide-book man. Some day I mean to ramble along those enchanted shores — some day, ere the world grows dim — if only to visit that sixty-foot monument erected at Laglio by Joseph Frank to his own memory and in grateful acknowledgment of his own worth. His was a noble idea. If the rich and distinguished people we know

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would but adopt it, and justly appraise themselves at their own valuation, the face of the earth would soon be covered with costly memorials.

The lake is shaped somewhat on the lines of the Three Legs of the Isle of Man, with Bellagio perched on a dividing promontory. I reached the landing-stage at exactly 6.45 P.M., Greenwich time.

At no great distance, I noticed the round towers of a castellated building nestling among the trees of a rock-guarded point. *Pace* Shakespeare, there is a good deal in a name.

An intelligent-looking vetturino seized me, but, ere I yielded, I pointed to the building which caught my eye.

"Castello Rondo?" I cried.

"Si, signor." He smiled.

"Signora Hutchinson?"

"Per certo, signor." He grinned all over his face. No doubt you have noticed the stupid habit of foreigners (when you do not know their language) in not replying "Yes" or "No" to your questions.

Anyhow, the words had a reassuring sound. I gave him the name of the hotel, and he appeared to regard my advent as a license to kill all who dared to cross his path. I think I heard every bad word in the Italian tongue before the

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vehicle deposited me, with a series of wild bounds up hill and down dale, at the hotel portico. The coachman swore at his horse, at pedestrians, chickens, dogs, and other charioteers, and interlarded his scurrility with appeals to the saints.

I believe he informed me that if I patronized him exclusively during my stay in Bellagio he would always drive like that. To do him justice, he kept his contract. I only saw him twice again, and in the second drive we bagged a hen, an apple-barrow, and the crutch of a cripple, who recovered miraculously when our fiery steed snorted down his neck.

A tub and a change of raiment removed the dust of empires. Now that I was actually in the same locality as Maggie Hutchinson, the means whereby I was to achieve my object were not so clear as the object itself. By hook or by crook I hoped to bring Miss Margaret and her mother back with me to London. The first train, in reason, left Como the following afternoon, and was timed to reach Victoria twenty-nine hours later.

So two whole days must pass before Hooper (to whom I had telegraphed my arrival) could expect relief. Would it be too late? And, in any event, would the ladies consent to accompany me? I was consumed with impatience so perplexed and worried that I despatched a

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second telegram to Hooper, asking him to wire me news of some sort. I strove to eat, but I was too eager for action to sit through a dinner of many courses.

Ultimately, I resolved to visit the Castello Rondo much earlier than politeness permitted, on the supposition that its occupants dined at the usual hour.

Outside the hotel my vetturino was watching for me, vulture-like, as his ancestors for many a generation had watched for the passing of unwary travelers through Cis-Alpine gorges. I have already recounted the exciting nature of our transit across Bellagio. The man was evidently mad with the joy of securing an Englishman.

The killing of the hen, the frenzy of the apple-vender, the curses of the cured cripple, each in its way tended to lend off the weight which a difficult task imposed on my spirits. Nevertheless, my heart sank in my boots when I raised a ponderous knocker, a wrought-iron ring in the mouth of a beautifully modeled lion's head, and delivered the first note of my mandate to Karl's lady-love.

That was a lasting peculiarity of my friend's sixth sense. Once removed from its aura, the mind began to deny it, faith wavered, the familiar things of life forbade its acceptance. Its nature

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and influence stood apart from all accepted theories of existence. It was inexplicable, insoluble, more nebulous than the Nirvana of the Buddhists. One felt as awkward as a professed scientist who purposed addressing a critical audience on the demonstrable truths of astrology or the doctrines of Mrs. Mary Baker G. Eddy.

My Jehu promised to await me *tutta via*, and I was admitted into a medieval courtyard — ancient in architectural design, that is — because the building was not old. Troubled though I was, a glance showed that the mansion was modern enough in its luxuries and equipment. Beyond a Grecian colonnade lay a smooth carpet of grass. Behind it, a series of terraces stretched down to the lake. Although the water was crimson with the glory of the setting sun, although clipped shrubs and ornamental flowerbeds were still glorious in the light of day, I was positively startled to see that the nearest lawn was the identical spot I had visited during the momentary spell Karl had cast upon me when we dined together on the night of my return from Heidelberg.

The knowledge shocked distrust out of my heart. I was thrice armed now. The whole crowd of extraordinary experiences which I had undergone since the uneventful picnic in the Schonau Forest rushed in on my memory.

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To lose belief in Karl was to account myself insane.

In popular idiom, we speak of certain events serving to "stiffen our backbone." The phrase has an added peculiarity when examined in its telegraphic significance, but, whatever its inward meaning, it had a salutary force for me just then. I had scarce noted the landscape of my waking dream when a tall elegant-looking young man came to me. I recognized him at once. He was the third figure of that uncanny moonlit scene — the "Italian, of good birth, madly in love with Maggie."

"I regret to say Miss Hutchinson is indisposed," he said in excellent English.

I have encountered several well-born Italians who are warranted to get up a frantic passion in five minutes for any nice young lady dowered with great wealth. I am glad to say I took this cavalier's measure at a glance. Perhaps, by and by, I may cultivate a sixth sense of my own. At any rate, I was quite sure he had snatched my card from the stupid domestic who came with him to the courtyard, and was interposing a barrier between Maggie and me.

"Did Miss Hutchinson send that message to me?" I asked.

"No; not exactly. She does not receive at this hour."

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"You have mistaken an urgent matter for a mere social call," I answered. "I have come straight to this house from London. I must see Miss Hutchinson immediately. Kindly send my card to her. She knows my name."

To avoid a scene, I let him down lightly. But when one man wishes to tell another that he is a cur, there are many varieties of speech. He flushed darkly, yet he had the wit to take the *via media* I offered.

"I am sorry," he said, with a bow of excessive courtesy. "The servant did not explain matters."

He gabbled some instructions in Italian, handed over my pasteboard, and proceeded to question me politely about my business. I found this amusing, but I had no wish to quarrel with him, so I gave him verbally what my old friend, Toff Wall, the "Brummagem Pet," used to call a "steadier on the bread-basket" by hinting at falling stocks, and followed it up with a "smasher on the snuff-box" in the shape of lachrymose comment on the sad reverses of fortune some people were subjected to.

This by-play was ended by the appearance of Maggie herself. In the rich half-light of that evening in wonderland, I thought I had never seen a woman so ethereally beautiful.

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The plump school-girl contour had given place to a delightfully piquant femininity. Surprise, pleasure, a vague feeling of alarm, enlivened her mobile face and incardinated her pale cheeks with a delicious rose tint.

I was quick to note, too, that she glanced at the Italian with some astonishment, even as she flitted towards me with outstretched hands, nor did she pay heed to the explanatory lie he murmured rapidly in his own language. I learnt afterwards that it was *his* presence for which she was "indisposed." But let him pass. I only set eyes on him once again — at the railway station.

"I am delighted to see you," she cried. "Remember you? Of course I do. But is it true what Baptisto said — that you have traveled from London on some errand of importance to me?"

"It is quite true," I said.

"Oh, come this way. It is nothing serious, I hope? Is — is Mrs. Grier ill?"

"No. It is on Karl's behalf I am here."

"Karl! Why Karl? I have not — met him for many years."

The slight pause, with its distinctive choice of a word, did not escape me. She was leading me through the house, a treasury of art in canvas and stone, and she had now ushered



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me into a room which, as I fully anticipated, was the boudoir-studio in which I had already seen her.

We were alone. I last beheld her on her knees in that identical apartment, and the memory of her tear-stained face surged in on me. It was no time to pick and choose expressions. The stereotyped language which I had framed to convey my thoughts was wholly inadequate to the demands of an interview fraught with such a momentous result.

I placed a hand on her shoulder, and I fear there was somewhat of a break in my voice as I said:

"I know much about you two. I cannot hold back my message. Karl, in this instant, is engaged in a desperate struggle between love and death. I come to you for him if not from him. I want you to return with me to England and save him."

"Save him!" she repeated, her large brown eyes dilating with a terror the true cause of which I did not divine instantly.

"Yes. I am speaking from my heart. Karl is at death's door. I, and another acquainted with all the circumstances, believe that you can bring him back to life. But you must come quickly. Even now you may be too late."

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She faced me with a vehemence that was altogether unexpected.

"What do you mean?" she cried. "You speak in riddles. What is Karl to me? I have driven him out of my heart, crushed his very image in my brain. He is nothing to me."

Her excited protest aroused my resentment.

"You, too, are using words which are meaningless if judged only by the common laws of entity. Yet it is not a week since you knelt here, in a passion of tears, and wrapped Karl in your innermost soul. Do not deceive yourself any longer. He is your preordained mate, and he is pining for you. Yet he is giving his life to rescue you from emotions which cause you poignant suffering. Go to him! Clasp him in your arms! You cannot, you must not, continue to resist him."

Poor girl! She looked wildly into my eyes, and then shrank away from me with a heart-breaking sob. She could not choose but believe me. In some respects, I was as thoroughly unstrung as she. I did not stop to consider whether or not I had taken the best way to win her to my point of view. Yet I endeavored most desperately, and it is somewhat to my credit, I fancy, to rescue the situation from the tornado into which it was plunged so suddenly.

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"Try and listen to me calmly," I said, for Maggie was crumpled up in a low chair, and gasping, without tears, in that agonizing manner of women when misery vanquishes them. "Karl loves you, and you love him. The sovereign passion has made a battle-ground of your hearts. You are at once happy and miserable, conscious of a superhuman ecstasy, yet self-condemned to separation from the one being who is all in all to you. The tension cannot endure. For five years the voluntary screen erected by you placed him and you in a spiritual trance. It has fallen now, and forever, yielding to the rude assault of those who dare to sever the bond which unites you until death. Is it not time you flew to your lover's embrace? Do you hold your scruples dearer than his life?"

"No, no, not that," she whispered. "None can be to Karl what I have been. But I am fearful of myself, fearful that I may destroy what I cannot create. Oh, what shall I say to make you understand that I have withheld myself from him not for my own sake but for his?"

"Let me reassure you there. Though Karl has never spoken to me of his love for you, I am sure he appreciates your self-sacrifice to the uttermost degree. And I, too, vaguely yet

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sincerely as I conceive a life beyond the grave, have formed some idea of the burthen you have borne. You are an inseparable element of Karl's existence. Owing to you, and through you, he developed faculties whose potency now threatens to overwhelm him. You are part of his very being, the spontaneous Eve of his earthly Paradise. Joined with you, he rises beyond the clouds of our present knowledge. Bereft of you, he sinks back to the level of every-day humanity. Do not force me to say harsh things of an obstinacy which keeps you apart."

"It was through me that Constantine died. I saw him torn to pieces. I heard his last cry. Would you have me eternally branded with a crime?"

Were it not for the tragic consequences of her decision, I could have smiled at this despairing effort to divert me from the track of the shadowy truth I was pursuing.

"You know full well that Constantine paid the penalty of the heedless man who touches a live wire," I protested. "You must blame his folly, not the relentless force which he incredulously despised. Come, now, Miss Hutchinson, I have said sufficient to prove to you that one other in the world, besides you and Karl, has probed the depths of the enigma

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which has terrified you for years. You are a woman to-day, not the timid girl who first saw visions on board the *Merlin*, and you have all a woman's capacity for boundless love. The fight and the dread are ended. You must come with me to Karl, and all will be well."

Going back to-day to the memories of that astounding scene, when I, to rescue my friend, flung prudence and a great many other wise restraints to the winds, I am guiltily conscious that the possible effect on Nora Cazenove of a marriage between Karl and Maggie did not weigh greatly in the scale of my argument. A man who sees a ghost may be pardoned if he uses certain extravagant expressions and entertains one-sided views on the subject of specters. I was nearer to the mysterious essence of telegnomy than I knew. Here, in the actual presence of the fair creature who was symbolic of the everlasting revivification of nature, I was carried out of myself, rapt to the skies in a mystical mood of awestricken exaltation. "My heart was hot within me and while I was thus musing the fire kindled." I seemed to be hovering on the very lip of knowledge. That which is sown in weakness and raised in power, sown a natural body and raised a spiritual body—that which men loosely

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style eternity — was clothing its enduring divinity with the perishable garments of earth.

How long I stood there, dazed with the immensity of this new intellectual horizon, I know not. The need of further speech had gone. Maggie, clasping her hands on her knees, was gazing at me with eyes which saw not, and I was waiting as though for some dread sentence which should snap invisible chains of wondrous strength, when a great change came over her face.

From abounding melancholy her aspect altered to that of transfixed horror. She sprang from the chair in which she was sitting and caught my arm with the tenacious strength of partial dementia.

"It is too late!" she muttered in a terrible voice. "Steindal has murdered Karl! And I, too, have helped to kill him! Oh, may Heaven forgive me!"

She herself sank as one dead. I held her while I cried in a frenzy for help. The wonder is that I did not collapse by her side.

## CHAPTER XXIV

### THE FALL OF THE CURTAIN

I SUPPOSE there are some supercilious mortals who will cavil at what they may be pleased to term the sensationalism of those doings in the London opera house and the Italian villa. There will surely be others ready to scoff at the fine rage into which Hooper and I worked ourselves in order to arrange the somewhat involved love affairs of a friend. Well, to the one set of critics, I can only reply that Karl did not die — in fact, if they turn back to the opening lines of this history, they will find his future career, a peaceful life blessed by an enchanted matrimony, set forth in the clearest words at my command. As for the others, the utterers of jibes, I have no such logical hammer with which to pound them to a jelly. There are those who have eyes and see not, ears and hear not; and who shall give them the additional senses the lack of which was thus deplored by the Evangelist Mark?

Indeed, I must not expect a host of believers. Some few will understand me when I say that

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it is possible for a man or a woman to love at first sight, instantly, absolutely, and forever. But — goodness me! — that doctrine will not go down with the multitude, and my natural candor impels me to admit that it would be a very troublesome and evil thing for the multitude if it did.

Nevertheless, I wish to explain, for the benefit of the elect (and we, dear fellow-visionary, you who are blessed with the full heart and the dreaming brain, we are the elect — of that there can be no manner of doubt in *our* minds), why it came about that Nora Cazenove and Maggie Hutchinson actually knew that Karl was suddenly stricken out of consciousness, a state which, to their overladen souls, was equivalent to his death.

Karl, locked in the suite of rooms at the Pall Mall Hotel, awoke from his restful sleep about eight o'clock. He was surprised to see by the shadows and the appearance of the streets that the hour was really as late as a glance at a clock revealed to his incredulous eyes. He wondered why and where Hooper had gone. Thinking that his friend, having evidently dressed for dinner, was dining alone rather than disturb him, he rang for the valet, and then came the explanation of the locked door.

It was the easiest thing for Karl to discover



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what Hooper was doing. The additional demand on his telegnomic sense made by such a quest was infinitesimal. But, probably because he was exceedingly run down and weak from want of food and sufficient rest, he yielded to a quick anger, determinedly set himself against any inquiry, and ordered the attendant to open the outer door immediately.

Of course, he was obeyed.

He could not change his clothing, but he laved his face and hands in cold water. This was refreshing in itself, but thenceforth he became aware of a steadily increasing strain on his magnetic energies. His nervous system was a delicate organism vastly more sensitive than the finest instrument known to science, though some have reached such perfection that a suspended needle in England can scratch on a prepared plate a record of the direction and magnitude of a ten seconds' earthquake at the Antipodes. He did not fear immediate dissolution as the result of the added burthen. He had devoted himself continuously, during many days, to maintaining the mental poise, so to speak, of the two human beings whose lives were so intimately linked with his own. He knew the exact strength of magnetic current needed for the task, and the perceptible growth of the tension now puzzled but did not alarm him.

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The slight feeling of irritation against Hooper was succeeded by a species of teeth-setting, a back-to-the-wall attitude, which hardened his resolve not to seek any information but simply to devote his dynamic powers to the new and strange tax made on them.

In a mood which may almost be termed one of bravado, he went down-stairs and entered the restaurant.

"Have you seen anything of Mr. Hooper?" he asked Jules, the head-waiter.

"Mais non, M'sieu'. He hass not been here at all."

"Perhaps he will turn up soon. Ask the chef to prepare us a *poulet en casserole*. That will give the wanderer twenty minutes' grace."

Jules, an acute observer of men, eyed his young patron covertly.

"You don'd look ver' well," he hinted. "Let me bring you a leetle pick-you-up — *un fortifiant* — shall it be a vermouth and Angostura?"

"It shall not," said Karl, a smile chasing the weariness from his face. "Don't worry about me, Jules. I am neither bull nor bear, backer nor layer. Nor has my best girl proved fickle. What I really do lack is that chicken."

Jules did not understand. But he knew that the trouble, whatever it was, was not to be removed by the revivers of general acceptance.

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Left to himself, Karl's thoughts began to wander. He asked himself how Hooper and I were speeding on our missions, because, by this time, he knew what Frank was doing. It is no matter for surprise that he followed me rather than the American in his musings. He was aware of that which I only suspected — that Maggie had deliberately shut him out from the sanctity of her presence until her edict was burnt up in the electric ardor of the new conditions set in motion by Karl's proposed marriage to Nora and the mere suggestion of her own union with the Italian.

Still fully alive to that ever-growing strain, which, of course, was caused by the opposing influence Hooper and I were establishing, he strove to keep his faculties within bounds. He shut his spiritual eyes, guarded his ears against the far-off sounds which might have troubled them, and endeavored to take a passive interest in the other people in the restaurant.

Notwithstanding his marvelous self-control, he was restless. He wished Hooper would return and put an end to the suspense by his agreeable rattle. He strove to eat some of the tempting *hors d'œuvres* set before him, but, like any sick child, he fancied he could touch nothing except the dish he had ordered, and it seemed to be unreasonably long in the cooking.

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Then he looked at his watch, Constantine's gift, and, after noting the hour, 8.40 P.M., he idly read the inscription inside the gold cover. By a queer trick of memory, his mind went back to the starlit sky and the black waters of the Bay of Bengal. He heard again the plash of the oars, saw the Armenian clinging to the buoy and plunging frantically, and renewed his childish awe at the long rows of shining lights in the ship's hull and the way in which her huge, dark bulk towered above the tiny boat when the sailors pulled alongside.

Then the black mass seemed to topple over on to him, there was a blaze of vivid light, and Karl lost consciousness.

What had happened was this. Steindal, vengeful as an infuriated ape, entered the restaurant just as Karl opened his watch. His dark eyes contracted and darted a lambent glare at the stalwart figure seated, as it transpired, at the very table where the Jew had indulged in his antics a few nights earlier. There came to him the maddening knowledge that many of those present exchanged nods, and winks, and inaudible asides, the moment he appeared. It may be that some subtle influence, some weakened inductive current, leaped out at him without Karl being either responsible for or aware of its action. The exact motive will never be known,

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but its result was lamentably evident. Steindal snatched a full bottle of champagne from the ice-pail in which it rested beside a neighboring table, and dealt Karl a murderous blow with it on the back of the head.

Maggie, who actually saw and heard what took place, gave a far clearer account of it than the horrified witnesses in the restaurant.

"Steindal's face assumed a demoniacal expression," she said, when, long afterwards, she was able to speak calmly of the unnerving spectacle. "I have read of the lust of murder, but I never knew what it meant until I saw his black eyes emitting a dull, red light, and his lips parting with an animal snarl. He leaped forward at Karl in a peculiar way. He seemed to bring down the bottle with an awful force just as his feet touched the ground. The bottle burst, and its fragments flew on all sides, some of the bits of glass cutting Steindal's forehead. With an activity I would not have credited in a man of his corpulence, and which he certainly did not exhibit in his normal life, he turned and ran out of the room, upsetting two tables and some chairs, and disappearing through a narrow doorway. Some gentlemen rushed after him, and others helped to raise Karl, who had fallen as one dead headlong on the table. I cannot say why it is, but my last sight of Steindal, bounding

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across the floor in the effort to escape, reminded me of that dreadful orang-outang described by Edgar Allan Poe in the 'Murders of the Rue Morgue.'"

Nora Cazenove knew nothing of this. She was only acutely aware of the snapping of the invisible link which held her fast. Hence, it is easy enough to understand the different cries of horror and bewilderment with which each girl announced her dread discovery.

A policeman, strolling past the Pall Mall exit from the hotel through which Steindal gained the street, supplied a succinct narrative of subsequent events so far as the would-be murderer was concerned. At the kerb was standing an empty hansom, the driver of which was fastening the nose-bag on its accustomed hook beneath the "dicky." Steindal sprang into the vehicle, leaned over the splash-board, seized the reins and shook the horse into a fast gallop.

The animal, a Londoner by adoption, was accustomed to this frenzied leap into activity when a whistling fare was to be secured from a rival. Being a careless beast, it kept on the right side of the road, which, in England, is the wrong side, and after a brief career in comparative safety, encountered a heavy 'bus crunching round the corner from Waterloo Place.

Steindal, yelling hysterically in Spanish (he

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went back to his Mexican mother's tongue, you see, when the lightning struck him), urged the horse to charge the oncoming Colossus. But the horse knew better than that, and swerved into the open space in front of the Duke of York's column. The unoccupied square was traversed at full speed. Ere the steed, far wiser than the man, could check his wild progress, he was flying down the long flight of steps into St. James's Park.

Most happily, the Jew's lunacy involved no further tragedy. At that particular hour, even on a summer night, central London is fairly empty. Therefore, the few privileged spectators of this unparalleled feat by a horse, cab, and man, saw the mad descent and heard Steindal's incoherent shrieks without being called on to tend some other unhappy sufferer from the escapade.

The horse, thoroughly frightened now, lost his coolness when the level ground was reached once more. He dashed on blindly, caught the vehicle against a tree, and the policemen and startled passers-by who then came on the scene extricated the insensible Jew from the ruins of the cab. He had been badly injured by the plunging hoofs, and fully six months elapsed before he was restored to health and Paris. In that time a great many things had happened

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Steindal thenceforth passed out of Karl's life. No action was taken against him for the attempted murder. The mad act was attributed to sudden mania, but he was warned that he must avoid England in future, if he would not undergo the *peine forte et dure*.

Hooper was the first to restore order out of chaos. The manner in which he rushed Nora Cazenove out of the box and into her own brougham astonished the opera-goers and made the "front of the house" gasp.

Did he take her to Sandilands' House? If ever you meet him, ask him, and you will hear an expressive Americanism.

Somewhat unjustly, he rated Nora all the way from Covent Garden to the hotel. His indignation was pardonable. Karl was his friend, and Nora he had seen for the first time half an hour earlier. If Karl were really dead, Hooper held that Nora's unreasonable passion was the chief cause of his death. Perchance, the masterful spirit he showed during that turbulent drive went a long way towards taming the impulsive nature of a very lovable and beautiful woman, for, queer whirligig of a world that it is, Nora is now Mrs. Hooper, and a very dear friend, indeed, of Maggie's. Don't imagine, for an instant, that Frank smirched the fair fame of all American husbands by "bossing" his charming



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wife. Next to Karl, and myself, he is a model Benedict.

Well, the anguish of that night in Como has long passed away, so I will not attempt to harrow your feelings by describing the heart-broken grief of Maggie, the scarcely less frenzied anxiety of her mother, the turmoil and worry and wild guessing at eventualities which racked us during three weary hours. When Steindal vanished from the restaurant so did Maggie's perceptiveness fade away. She strove, with a fierce longing, to follow the little *cortège* which carried Karl up-stairs. It was useless. The veil had fallen. She moved and spoke with the hopeless air of a woman beaten to her knees. I think she was overborne by the experiences of that trying period. Had Karl died, I am sure she would not have survived him long.

I quitted the castle at ten o'clock. Some English-speaking servant told the vetturino to drive slowly. Yet, an hour later, I needed his daring, because a lame horse brought me back all too slowly to show Maggie a second telegram from Hooper:

"Karl lives. Doctors predict recovery."

By some miracle it reached me that night. Be sure I pounded hard on the lion's head knocker of the Castello Rondo to convey the glad news.

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Other messages to hand in the morning rescued our journey to London from the misery which must have attended it otherwise. The Italian count saw us off from Como. I did not grudge him that happiness. It was his parting glimpse of his divinity — and her fortune.

Slow as the mail train seemed to us in its scurry through Italy, Switzerland, and France, we passed many a weary hour in England before Karl recovered his five senses, to say nothing of the sixth. During four days he lay prone at the gate of death, his breathing slow, labored, and stertorous, the pupils of his eyes dilated unequally.

But splendid surgery saved him. The injury was so serious that a prompt operation, carried out before his parents were even aware of his condition, alone pulled him back from the void. Steindal's blow, delivered on the side rather than the back of the head, caused a depressed fracture of the skull, a tiny bit of bone being driven into the temporo-sphenoidal lobe. The resultant concussion, too, passed rapidly into a compression of the brain arising from effusion of blood. It was the breaking of the bottle which delivered Karl from instant death. Had such a heavy implement retained its solidity, the shock must necessarily have been fatal.

The expert surgeon who carried out the requi-

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site trephining gave me these details after one of his visits. Karl was yet unconscious, and this was the fourth morning after the attack!

Maggie, frail ghost, waylaid us in the corridor. "Doctor," she whispered, "may I see him?"

Medical men are telegnomists in their way. He had noticed her on the previous day, soon after our arrival, in fact, and his professional eye was attracted by her ethereal beauty.

"Yes," he said. "That will do no harm. But you must promise to keep quiet."

"I promise," she answered.

He led her to the room where Karl lay, tended by hospital nurses. None hindered, so I went with them. Maggie was braver than I thought. She moved noiselessly to the head of the bed and stooped over the recumbent form. Karl was restless, almost fretful. The light was dim, yet I distinctly caught the unspoken question on Maggie's lips as she turned and looked at the surgeon who attended.

She bent and kissed Karl lightly on the forehead, where the bandages left a little space. Then she murmured, ever so tenderly:—

"Karl, *mera piyára*, I am here!"

What heaven-sent inspiration moved that "maiden with the meek, brown eyes" to utter those Persian words of endearment? Many a year had passed since Karl and she spoke

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Hindustáni to each other. She had almost forgotten the language, yet the first gush of impulse renewed the fount, and here was she calling him her sweetheart as she was wont to do in the lisping childhood of far-away Darjeeling.

The doctor told me that it was coincidence -- blessed explanation! -- that consciousness frequently returned on the fourth day in such cases -- but, however it may be, Karl looked up at Maggie in the most natural way and said quite rationally:

"I thought you would come, dear. Don't leave me again."

He *thought* she would come! And when had he done the thinking? Oh, that wonderful, misunderstood brain of ours! How little do we appreciate its awful mystery!

Were I writing a mere novel I would, of course, dwell on the joys of convalescence -- describe in touching phrase the quiet content of those two turtle doves, when one might sit and read the other bits of news of the outer world, pausing ever and anon to ask, with the love-light in her glance, if he was sure she was not tiring him. What between Mrs. Grier, and Maggie, and two of those human angels who wore the uniform of some great hospital, never was man so waited on. Plenty of good

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fellows of my acquaintance have come a cropper at polo, scrunching their craniums on a maidán hard as iron, without a quarter so much fuss being made over them. Yet, seeing that I embarked on a semi-scientific voyage with the pen, so must I end my quest in similar strain. The surgeon who described Karl's injuries so lucidly became curious as to the meaning of certain hints dropped by Hooper and myself, more especially when he chanced to hear the elder Grier denouncing telegnomy and all its arts.

Gradually, feeling my way with the wariness of a mole, I led him along the underground paths of the sixth sense so far as I could track them. He listened with increased interest. Ultimately, he asked me to introduce him to Sir William Macpherson. They discussed learnedly for a long time, and they agreed, at last, in a mild definition:

"The upper temporo-sphenoidal lobe contains the cortical auditory center," they said. "The functions of the middle and lower lobes are not definitely ascertained. Karl Grier is stated to have exhibited abnormal manifestations of unrecognized cerebral activities, and, as these seem to have ceased since he received the blow, it is advisable to point out that the resultant fracture of the skull caused a lesion of the two lobes in question."

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They would go no further than that in writing. But they went a long way further in speech, and, if any encouragement on the part of those eminent specialists could have induced Karl to recover his lost faculties, that encouragement was certainly forthcoming.

He has unhesitatingly declined to attempt any such thing. He is happy in his wife, his children, and his surroundings, and he is not willing to tempt the fates again. He has admitted to me that he is still aware of tidal influence (which, be it remembered, affects the solid earth as well as the unstable water), and he believes he has the power, if he chose to exert it, of seeing and hearing far more of other people's business than he desires to know.

But he refuses to face the unknown again. He carried the experiment far beyond the bounds of present scientific investigation. I have described some part of the inquiry and its outcome. Both of us are content to allow others to take up the threads of knowledge where they have fallen from our hands.